

**Revisiting the sacred landscapes of
Northeast Italy between the 8th
century BC and the 2nd century BC**

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REVISITING THE SACRED LANDSCAPES OF NORTHEAST ITALY BETWEEN THE 8TH CENTURY BC AND THE 2ND CENTURY BC

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my beloved grandfather Domenico Favero: frontline fighter in the Italian Resistance, free-thinking and learned, he was a figure of constant inspiration to me.

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I was honoured to be able to work with these local specialists: they possess a truly enviable interdisciplinarity that knows no boundaries of 'history', 'archaeology', 'topography', 'geography' and 'folklore' in their perspective on material culture and landscape; these are people who have a truly open mind to receive and discuss 'unorthodox' ideas and concepts, scholars who know their heritage inside out from a number of intertwining perspectives, but whose voices are not always heard in the wider Italian/regional archaeological debate. They are the kind of scholars I aspired to be, the kind I have become, and for that I am most grateful.

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Without you all this thesis would not be. Thank you.

Abstract

My thesis offers a humanistic and experiential re-interpretation of the relationship between people, landscape and the gods in Iron Age and Romanisation Northeast Italy (from the 8th century BC to the 2nd centuries BC included). In it I search for, and explore a 'Venetic sense of place' by appraising the significance of cult practices within a complex network of social groups known as the 'Veneti'.

After identifying the shortcomings of current research on Iron Age Veneto – and pre-Roman Italy as a whole –, which is largely typological and site-based with little attention to the landscape context and materiality of meaningful places, I adopted an approach that questions previous landscape and artefact interpretations and challenges monument-biased assumptions. I argue for a thicker and more comprehensive outlook on ancient places, be it 'natural' landscapes or humanly made structures and features.

My chief aim is that of investigating and bringing to the fore the complex dynamics of landscape dwelling, navigation, place selection and worship: to do so I endeavoured to produce a rigorous and systematic study of how people used landscape and how they related to the meaningful objects they deposited at selected locales.

My original approach includes landscape reconnaissance, a site log, interpretative fieldwork, archival research, ground photography, 'experiential maps', the application of phenomenology to place assessment and material culture/ artefact appraisal, and the use of GIS. I have created a methodology that allows fieldwork to be repeated as it is rigorously documented, and offers an approach to place and material culture that could be used to assess other types of landscapes, and could be applied to prehistoric, protohistoric and historic case studies.

Whenever possible I have also sought to integrate ethnological data into my assessment of place, seeking to complement and integrate my knowledge of past cult and ritual in various parts of the Veneto with insights potentially afforded by legends and myths.

I used this mixed approach as I believe that landscape perception, use, material culture and local place names and folklore can shed light on how people experienced landscapes and interacted with them.

I found that Venetic peoples seemed to be very aware of their land and surroundings when seeking out suitable or significant places for special activities such as burials and cult practices, and certain particularly striking landforms had a very enduring and marked significance, and a deep impact on people through time.

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Preface

Until now, the study of the ritual customs and practices of Italic peoples has largely been approached in terms of material culture analyses geared toward an establishment of artefact typologies and site chronology (Chieco Bianchi 1988). Working primarily with scant and unreliable stratigraphic and contextual data in the interpretation of ritual deposits and sites, scholars have used ex-votos to establish chronological sequences, while neglecting the topographical setting and cultural aspects of the votive deposits in the process (Capuis 1993: 44).

One can easily understand the rationale behind this course of action: prehistoric and protohistoric Italic peoples left very few and often insubstantial structural remains bearing witness to their cults, and, as I will discuss in chapter 6, the lack of structures and monuments is perceived as a barrier and shortfall strongly felt in modern academic practice (at least in Italy).

Regrettably, the Venetic peoples are not the exception to the rule (of scant and unsubstantial remains): the chronicle of the quest for Venetic religion is one made of 19th century landowners, bona fide amateurs and loot hunters. Besides, only a minority of the known shrines have been systematically excavated in recent years. As a result, we can appreciate that the task of reconstructing, if not understanding Venetic cults and ritual could be perceived as difficult.

It was a 'tempting' step on the part of scholars to treat the votive objects, either collected and recorded during fieldwalking or simply retrieved from an antiquarian's collection, as if they were miniature shrines per se; as if the whole meaning, significance and extent of a ritual site could be extracted from a single minute portion of it. This long-held approach to the study of Venetic shrines and votive deposits has laid too big an emphasis on the votive object as absolute material culture symbol and has achieved the result of alienating the object from its original cultural context. It is almost as if every ex-voto had been treated as an extraordinary entity suspended in a vacuum rather than one part of a deliberately produced assemblage in a special, culturally signifying locale (cf. Edlund 1987: 125 and Bradley 1990: 13-15).

The entire background literature on Venetic culture and cult makes certain assumptions and adopts certain standpoints that I do not necessarily agree with. I had to take them into consideration nonetheless, these standpoints being the dominant trend in the field and the only approach taken in the existing literature and current practice. This thesis has been a sort of 'translation' exercise as well as a work of research: my brain has

constantly worked on two parallel tracks that very seldom met- the artefact-based side of things in Italian and its theoretical counterpart in English. My research has in a way created a common ground between these two very different lines of thought and methodologies.

In background chapter 1 and in chapter 4 I will present the views of Italian scholars on issues of chronology and other aspects of the 'Venetic' cultural facies, and always make a distinction between these and my own.

The timescale encompassed by the present thesis goes from roughly the 8th century BC to the 2nd BC (this chronology follows the start and development of shrines and votive deposits, and it does not strictly define the local Iron Age; a mention of the debated start of the Iron Age is found in chapter 1.2.1) but scope for discussion is much wider, as I will discuss in chapters 3 and 6.

The types of votive deposits examined range from unsubstantial scatters of votive objects in a specific locale to large scale, long term deposits which can be defined as 'shrines' in their own right. Similarly, the topographical settings where deposits occurred in the Iron Age are most diverse: rural hill sites; locales in relation to water sources such as springs, rivers, lagoons, lakes and marshes; locales attached to settlement sites; locales positioned along trade or transit routes; sites in the mountains; sites on the plains; sites near cemeteries; locales almost completely isolated from other sites.

We can but infer details of the ancient topography of many of these locales as almost no environmental data have been collected at any of them (but see Peresani 1998), and scholars mostly rely on geomorphological reconstructions such as those by Claudio Balista (Balista and Rinaldi 2003) to understand the patterns of past environment. For a few sites we can however attempt an environmental change assessment, which is what I discuss in chapter 1.1.1 below.

Much as I acknowledge the many important insights into Venetic cults originating from painstaking and informed votive analyses conducted in the last four decades by scholars such as Capuis, Leonardi, Chieco Bianchi, Mastrocinque, Gambacurta and Maioli and Pascucci there is nonetheless a pressing need to retrieve the materiality of votive deposits *and* objects and to return them where they belong: in their specific landscape and cultural setting (Capuis 1993, 1999; Chieco Bianchi 1996; Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006; Mastrocinque 1987, 1993, 1994; Gambacurta 1996; Maioli 1986, 1992; Pascucci 1990).

Therefore, my present research seeks to accomplish this precise task, and evaluates and contextualises the relationship between Iron Age Venetic votive deposits, their landscape setting, the ex-votos and the people engaging with these places, exploring the significance of these relationships; going much further than a mere discussion of artefacts

on a typological basis (i.e. Pascucci 1990), this thesis seeks to identify and contextualise the experience of place and identity of Venetic groups dedicating gifts to the gods and, on a more general level, living and experiencing the landscape.

My decision not to apply different criteria of interpretation to sites according to whether they were 'natural' or 'built' locales informs my approach to places, which is thematic and topographical rather than chronological/evolutionary, and reflects my wish to dispel the dichotomy culture/nature encountered in much landscape archaeology literature. My analysis is concerned with landscapes as meaningful 'wholes', in a manner that is theoretically closer to cultural geography and humanistic architecture (cf. Wylie 2007: 9 ff; 154-155).

A caveat is in order: I will be using the terminology 'Veneti' and the attribute 'Venetic' throughout the present thesis purely as a matter of convenience, as I believe the above terms to be both inaccurate and restrictive in terms of geographical boundaries and in light of the established variety of cultural identities. We shall return to this topic in more detail below and in the discussion and conclusion chapter (chapters 1 and 6).

In order to analyse in sufficient depth the complexity of Venetic votive deposits I have chosen to focus my investigations on a series of case studies I feel to be particularly relevant and representative of the dataset, to then cross-analyse the individual results in a general discourse.

This thesis will approach a number of questions: *in primis*, what is the underlying relationship between a landscape as a whole and specific meaningful locations? What roles did the issues of ancestry, place biographies and human memory play in the selection of special locales - i.e. the presence of earlier sites or habitation at the spot or near it - through time? Do meanings tied to places overlap, evolve, regenerate (cf. Morris 1989, 57)? What contribution can a 'humanistic' (see disclaimer on page 57) landscape assessment make to the understanding of Iron Age sacred sites and social processes? What can we learn from a phenomenological reading of special locales?

Lastly, and this is only partially addressed in this thesis (but mainly explored in appendix 3) but constitutes scope for future work, I will show how an understanding of the long-term significance of places, achieved by archival research and study of oral history, local place-names, historical documents, historical maps, myths and legends can bring to the fore an all-round 'sense of place' and identity. By the end of the thesis, it will become clear that there are never clean breaks between periods, and that certain places tend to maintain a degree of significance through the centuries and are reinterpreted, forgotten,

hidden, rediscovered, reinvented and reborn through material culture, oral and written traditions (cf. Cooney 1994: 39-41).

Chapters 1 and 2 provide the theoretical background to this study and 'set the stage' for an in-depth analysis of the Venetic landscape.

The first section of Chapter 1 describes the morphology and characteristics of the modern terrain of the Veneto and Friuli-Venezia Giulia regions, followed by a section 1.1.1 assessing the potential environmental change since the Iron Age. Then in the following section I progress to review current knowledge on the 'Veneti': I have subdivided this review into brief subsections containing, respectively, aspects of chronology, literacy, Situla Art (see below), settlement sites and cemeteries. A more detailed section 1.3 subsequently discusses the history and current state of research in the field of Venetic votive deposits: here I also supply some useful definitions.

In Chapter 2, I take a step back to embrace a more general theoretical framework that underpins the entire thesis argument: in it I offer an overview of current theories and practice of landscape archaeology with phenomenological and spatial-analytical digital applications such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and discuss their usefulness in light of the current research questions. Section 2.2 offers a literature review illustrating the main lines of thought and research trends in the archaeology of cult, votive deposits and humanistic landscape archaeology.

Based on the problems and ideas identified in the previous chapters, Chapter 3 drafts my research design: the theoretical framework and methodology used in the investigation of the thesis aim and research questions. In this chapter I assess the usefulness and feasibility of a phenomenological application to the Iron Age Venetic landscape, 'sacred' locales and the objects found therein. I then discuss the potential benefits of such analysis in the current state of research. In addition to a 'problem assessment' and a preliminary identification of the research potential of each ritual location, I explain the rationale behind my sampling strategy. I then outline the field methodology by which I carried out my evaluation. To begin with, I provide an account of all thoughts and preparations before fieldwork, including a desk-based assessment of the sustainability of the project. I then identify practical problems I encountered (such as the dearth of pre-industrial photographs of the area, the limited availability of pre-1960s maps for most of the region, and potentially disruptive elements in the landscape -for example electrical pylons and mobile transmitters) and other factors affecting fieldwork viability).

Chapter 4 offers a themed overview of sacred places in the Veneto during the Iron Age and their role in the local landscapes: it offers a discussion of Venetic votive deposits

based on categories such as the contexts they were located in, site chronology, range of votive offerings, relationships with other sites, and the issue of continuity of cult in the Roman period, followed by preliminary observations on identified patterns in deposit types, votives and chronological duration.

The following chapters describe the fieldwork and discuss the findings of my project. Chapter 5 describes twenty case studies: based on questions and relevant points arising from the discussion in chapter 4, I apply these to the selected 'sites'.

Chapter 6 offers an overall assessment of field data and locates the results in a broader theoretical framework. I discuss the utility and viability of the phenomenological exercise when applied to the understanding of past cultural landscapes in general. I then consider whether place-specific perception, landscape and terrain morphology had a bearing or influence on the iconography of certain votives (i.e. the 'peak' bronze laminae). The final section integrates the outcome of this study with the aim of this project and offers an interpretation of the significance of sacred places and meaningful landscapes in a broader cultural framework.

Appendix 1 contains a database of Venetic shrines and votive deposits, along with settlements and cemeteries that are mentioned in the thesis.

The numbers in brackets next to site names mentioned in the main thesis text refer to their ID number in the appendix.

Appendix 2 contains the template "fieldwork form" and individual field forms of the case studies.

As mentioned above, appendix 3 contains the preliminary findings of my research on local and oral history, place-name studies, local topographies and folklore, in order to understand the workings of place biographies through the centuries.

Let the journey begin.

Chapter 1. The Veneto and the Venetic peoples

Following references to 'Venetic cultures' and the 'Veneto' in the introduction, I will illustrate these notions in greater depth. Firstly, I will delineate the principal traits of Venetic culture in order to fully grasp the variety and complexity of Iron Age votive deposits in chapters 4 to 5E.

Section 1.1 sketches the geographical area under study and reveals the vastness and complexity of the land where the Venetic peoples lived.

Section 1.1.1 offers an assessment of environmental and land morphology changes likely to have occurred in antiquity, particularly in the Adige and Po valleys.

1.2 describes some aspects of Venetic culture/cultures divided into thematic sections: 1.2.1 provides the commonly accepted chronology of Venetic culture and a brief discussion; 1.2.2 looks at the issue of Venetic literacy; I draft the rise of Venetic urbanism in 1.2.3, I discuss burial data in 1.2.4, then offer a brief overview of *Situla Art* in 1.2.5.

Section 1.3 explores the current state of research on Venetic cult and outlines the main achievements of Venetic scholars past and present, whilst identifying problems in the existing literature, gaps in current knowledge and highlighting potential new paths for research on the subject. This section also contains a glossary illustrating the commonly used terminology for geographical entities and different types of votive deposits.

1.1 The modern and ancient land

North-eastern Italy is commonly known as '*Le Tre Venezie*' (The Three Venices), '*Le Venezie*' and '*Triveneto*': these are leftover toponyms from the dominion of the *Serenissima Repubblica Veneziana* on the land until the early 1797 AD, when Venice became part of the Austrian Empire. Interestingly, these toponyms seem rather more apt for the geographical scope of my study than merely 'the Veneto': in fact, the territory of the so-called Triveneto comprises the Veneto and the modern region of Friuli Venezia Giulia. The slightly older name of *Le Tre Venezie* also includes the westernmost fringes of Istria and Dalmatia.

Similarly, the Iron Age peoples we call 'Veneti' did not only inhabit the land that bears their name nowadays, but the neighbouring territories as well: the Friuli, the Giulia district, Eastern Lombardy, sections of the land beyond modern Italian borders in Slovenia (i.e. Santa Lucia di Tolmino) and perhaps as far North as the Gailtal in Austria (Gurina, see Capuis 1993, 20). To complement the maps provided (figs. 1.1, 1.2) I will presently describe the nature and morphology of the terrain.

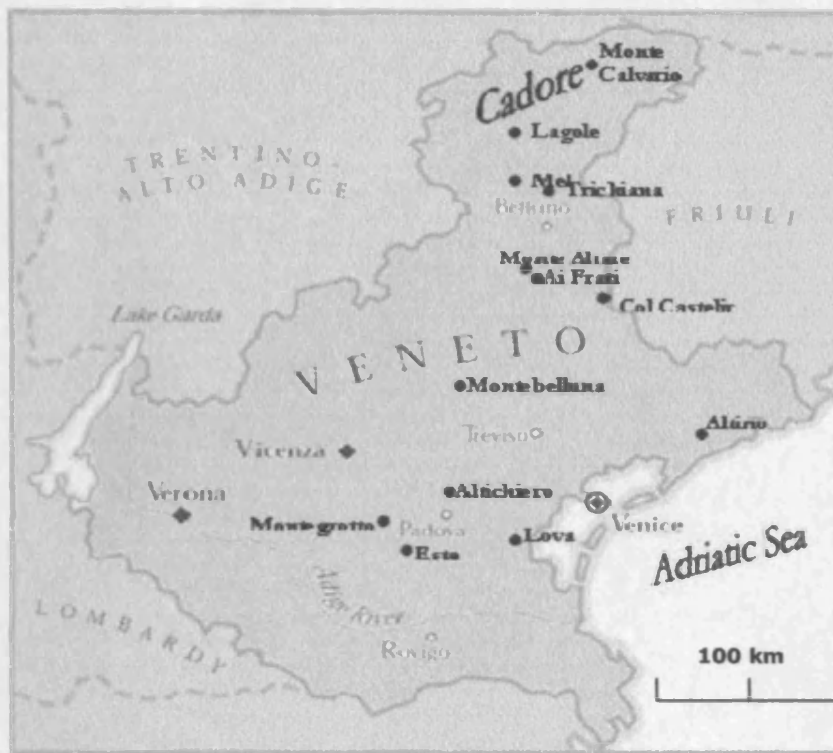


Figure 1.1. The Veneto in Northeast Italy and neighbouring regions

Figure 1.2. Comparison of income in the Veneto

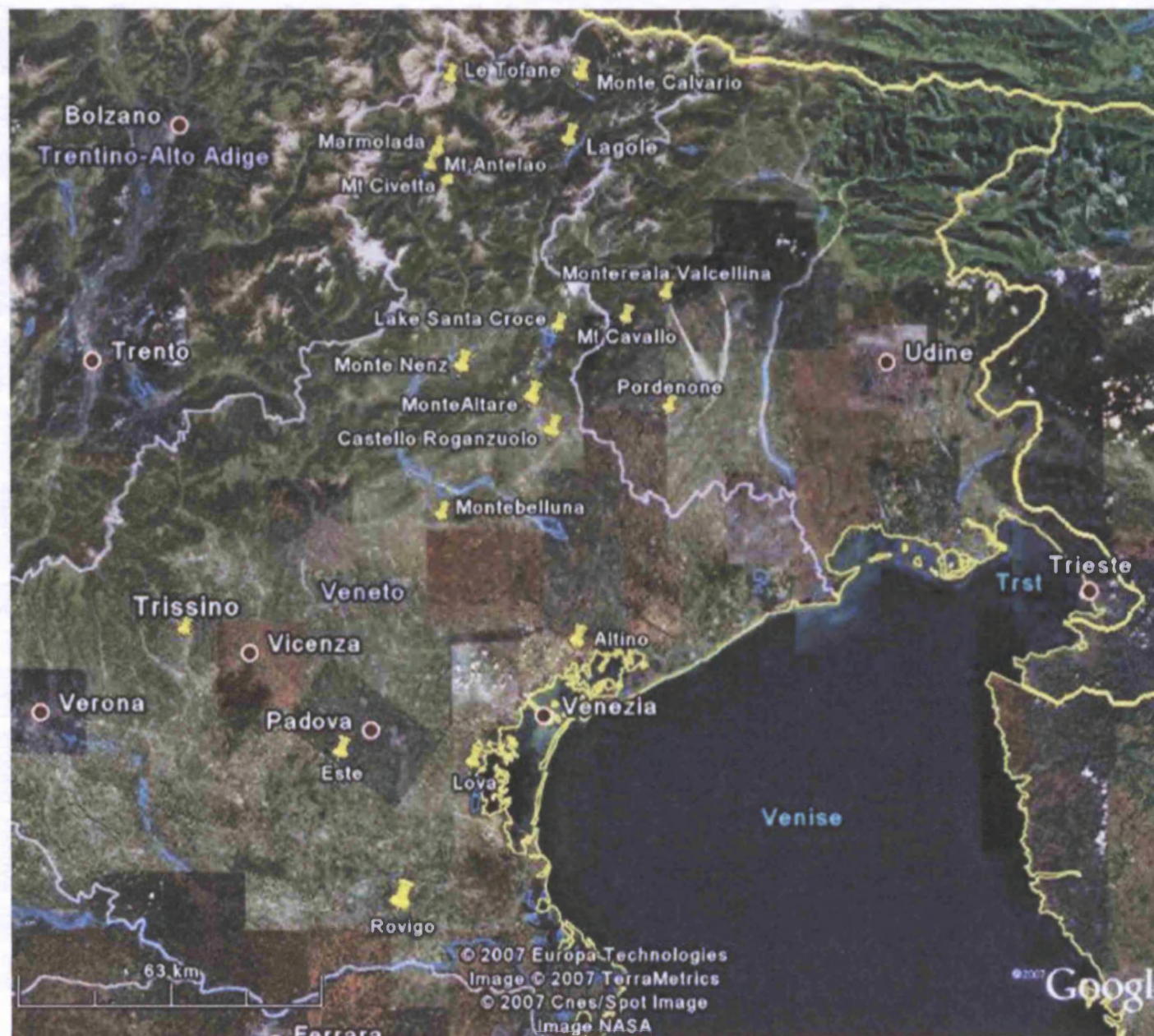


Figure 1.2. GoogleEarth image of the Veneto

The region and its boundaries

The administrative region of the Veneto borders with Lombardy to the West, with the Trentino Alto Adige to the North and Northwest, with Austria to the North, with the Friuli-Venezia Giulia to the East-Northeast and with Emilia Romagna to the South. Its south eastern portion consists of the Adriatic coast (see fig. 1.2).

The region is mostly flat (57% ca.), with a mountainous 29% and a hilly 14% (<http://www.italycyberguide.com/Geography/regions/veneto.htm>).

The landscape ranges from the harsh mountain peaks to the Venetian lagoon; from the Adriatic coastline running between Rovigo and Grado (Udine) to the Gulf of Trieste via the Po plain; from the spring line ('risorgive') to the piedmont ('pedemontana').

North of the Greater Venetian area lies the Trevigiano or Treviso district, ranging from marshland in the South to the hilly regions of the 'pedemontana' in the North. The piedmont region lies immediately below the first major mountain chains and consists of the hilly localities of the Montello, the Asolo hills and Vittorio Veneto in the Veneto, Pordenone, the lower Aviano heights in the Western Friuli and Gorizia in the Giulia respectively. Further North lie the Prealpi Bellunesi in the Alpi and further North the mountainous region of the Cadore (Selva, Calalzo, Auronzo, San Candido and Comelico) and the Dolomiti Alpine belt.

Northeast and east of the Trevigiano lies the Friuli - Venezia Giulia with the administrative province of Pordenone (here abbreviated to PN). N-NE of Pordenone and its territory is the Udinese area, a vast province comprising the highlands of the Carnia with various centres such as Tarvisio and San Daniele del Friuli, and the lower hilly areas where the city (capoluogo) of Udine is situated.

Further to the S-SE is the Gorizia area in the Giulia, including the modern centres of Monfalcone, Trieste and the lower Eastern Adriatic coastal strip to the South (Lignano, Grado, Aquileia and so on), bordering with Istria and Slovenia.

Heights

The main peaks are: the Marmolada (3342 m a.s.l.), Le Tofane (3243 m), Monte Civetta (1200 m), the Antelao (3264 m), and the Prealpi, consisting of such heights as the Pian Cavallo (2064 m), Monte Pizzoc (1575 m), the Altipiano del Cansiglio, Altipiano di Asiago, Monte Grappa (1775 m).

In the NW part of the region we have the Colli Berici, the Monti Lessini and the Prealpi Veronesi with Monte Baldo, 2147, whereas the Po plain around Padova has the promontory of the Colli Euganei, isolated volcanic peaks in the surrounding flatland.

Rivers

The main rivers are: the Po (652 km) flowing in the South and South-western portion of the territory; the Adige (410 km) in the central section of the land; the Brenta (160 km) and the Bacchiglione (118 km) in the South central- SE territory; the Tartaro (52km) in the West (Veronese area); the Sile (75 km) and the Livenza (112 km) in the Treviso - Oderzo - Venice districts in the Centre-North; the Piave (220 km) and the Meduna (20 km ca.) in the upper Treviso region in the NE; the Tagliamento (170 km) in the Friuli. Also in the Friuli; the Isonzo (136 km) springs in the Carnia and flows in the Gorizia region in the Giulia, and the stretch of the Timavo (42 km) between Monfalcone (GO) and Miramare (TS) represents a sort of "natural boundary between Italy and Istria" (Capuis 1993:19). The Timavo is a karst peculiarity as it flows underground for the first 40 km (<http://it.wikipedia.org>). This peculiarity could explain why the river was venerated as a god in Roman and possibly pre-Roman times (see below).

Lakes

There are two lakes worthy of mention: Lake Garda, of which the SE portion lies within Venetic territory (the total surface of the lake is 370 sq km), and the Lago di Santa Croce (7.8 sq. km) in the Val Lapisina, immediately North of Vittorio Veneto (TV).

1.1.1 Environmental change

In antiquity the morphology of the terrain would have been quite different from today.

The Venetic territory is likely to have consisted of sparse cultivated areas of varying expansion (Bosio 1984: 15): these cultivated areas catered for the needs of individual settlements, were not systematic and not organised in a pattern across the region. vast uncultivated areas were devoted to the grazing and rearing of domesticated animals (i.e. cattle, sheep and horses) and to hunting practices (ibid: 15).

All this changed when the Romans arrived, and changed the landscape almost beyond recognition. They divided the countryside into *kardines*, *decumani* containing evenly spaced *centuriae* (plots of land) serving both habitation and defensive purposes (ibid: 18) and established extensive road networks (see above).

In the case of the Po valley, from the coast to the piedmont, the Romans undertook extensive reclamation works, channelling of water courses and deforestation to create new cultivable land for the Roman *coloni* inhabiting the *centuriae* (ibid: 18-19) when the first major transport routes were established to connect several *municipia* and emporia both within and outside the geographical bounds of the Veneto, or 10th *Regio*.

The Romans divided up into *centuriae* the upper Po valley above the spring line, that would have previously proved more difficult to cultivate, and enhanced the productivity of the area transforming it into a more fertile land by irrigation works (ibid: 20).

The Romans initiated a process of change that developed in the following centuries both by human intervention and natural causes: for instance, the course of the river Adige was also substantially altered as early as 589 AD (the account of the Rotta della Cucca is given in Paul The Deacon's *Historia Longobardorum* Book III, 23).

Extensive cultivation took place throughout the centuries in the whole of the region, apart from the northern part where pastoralism predominated, such as in the Cansiglio and Alpi regions of the Prealpi (Peresani 1998). These areas would have been even more thickly forested than today, with the Cansiglio woods (fig. 1.3) occupying an even larger part of the Prealpine landscape and marking, like today, the boundary between the Veneto and the Friuli.

In the 1st millennium BC woodland, mostly oak but also beech, elm and fir, extended down into the southern Po plain, before Roman deforestation (Capuis 1993: 108).

The Romans substantially changed the shape and look of the Po plain where they extensively reclaimed the marshes and creating drainage systems: the best and most accurate reconstruction of the past character of the Venetian area and neighbouring eastern Po plain can be found in the geomorphological study by Bondesan and Meneghel (Bondesan and Meneghel 2004, eds.).



Figure 1.3. The Cansiglio woods, the Alpi (Belluno) and piedmont.
 From http://digilander.libero.it/vlp/images/cartina_provincia.gif

Communication routes in prehistory and in the Roman period

Viability of transport and transit routes throughout the region would have been good even in prehistoric times, as the most part of the Veneto is rather flat and does not encompass the considerable altitudes and narrow river valleys that made human intra-territorial movement quite difficult in areas such as the Picenum or Abruzzi in Central Adriatic Italy.

In fact, the natural barrier of the Alps would have represented an actual topographic and symbolic entity for neighbouring populations; it is likely that some of the Alpine passes would have been negotiable year round.

The existence of prehistoric track-ways in the territory is still debated, but we can attempt to recognise ancient pathways in rural areas of the region (Arnosti 1983, 10ff.).

Armando De Guio identified a Neolithic trackway in the area of Montecchio Vicentino (cf. De Guio 1997), for instance.

Below I will argue the probable existence of one such path connecting Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age settlements in the Val Belluna- Val Lapisina- Vittorio I territory (Arnosti 1983: 10; 1996: 60).

Centuriation shaped the terrain of the Regio X, the *Venetia* by systematically dividing the land into several *pagi* and *vici* (Bosio 1984: 18-21; Arnosti 1996a: 12 ff.). To connect these centres with each other, with Rome and with the provinces beyond the Alps, the Romans established extensive road systems in the region. It is believed that they took advantage of the topography of the I to establish their network of roads connecting different Roman centres and territories, and often followed pre-existing trackways when they were located in favourable positions, such as those corresponding to Alpine passes (Rosada 1984: 26 ff.). Scholars such as Pierangela Croce Da Villa (Croce Da Villa 1999: 211), Guido Rosada (Rosada 1984: 26 ff.) and Giorgio Arnosti (Arnosti 1996b: 94, 100) believe that the Romans did indeed take advantage of extant transits for a variety of purposes, from commercial routes to military trajectories. Rosada believes that as early as the Late Bronze Age, the Resia and Brennero passes in the neighbouring Trentino were used for commercial purposes (Rosada 1984: 23).

The earliest established Roman road in Venetic territory was the '*Via di M. Aemilius Lepidus*' in 175 BC (Croce Da Villa 1999: 211; Arnosti 1996b: 63). Its route is still debated: however, there seems to be an agreement that it started in Bologna and ended in Aquileia, possibly on the course of a pre-existing Venetic track-way (Arnosti 1996b: 62).

The *Via Postumia*, linking Genoa with Aquileia was established in 148 BC (Croce Da Villa 1999: 211; Arnosti 1996b: 77). It also linked Padua and Asolo, and the tract between

these two centres is not rectilinear as it could be expected in a plain area: it was altered by its constructor to follow a pre-existing centuriation pattern (Bosio 1984: 19).

The *Via Annia* connected Adria to Aquileia and was completed in 131 BC (Arnosti 1996b: 80-81).

The *Via Aurelia* (probably completed by 74 BC) (Bosio 1984: 19) went from Padua to Asolo in the piedmont (Arnosti 1996b: 85), whereas the *Via Julia Augusta* was established by 2 AD and linked Concordia (Julia Concordia) with the Noric regions beyond the Dolomites (ibid: 68).

In the northeast territory another route, datable to the 2nd century BC on the basis of materials and sites found along its route, is thought to have existed between the spring line in the I to Tarzo (TV), Ceneda (Vittorio I), Castello Roganzuolo, the Livenza valley, Montereale Valcellina in the Friuli (PN), the Tagliamento valley and finally through the Alpine pass of I Croce Carnico, (UD) to the Austrian and Eastern Swiss area - the "Noricum" (Arnosti 1996b: 67-69). This road, called *Via Aemilia Submontana* (Arnosti 1996b: 92-93) is not signalled by milestones and is inferred on the basis of Roman toponyms along the way, with the addition of scattered shrines and votive deposits along the alleged route. It also seems that the path was already in use in pre-Roman times. This fact, as I will discuss below (chapter 4 on Venetic votive deposits) may bear a remarkable significance on the existence, significance and purpose of several rural and en route shrines in the North-eastern part of the land (fig. 6.14 on page 365).

The merit of centuriation and the road network was not only of a practical nature as an aid to commerce and transport, but also facilitation and opening up of more intensive cultural contact between the peoples of the plains and the mountain region, and the extensive network of roads and paths brought together different cultural as well as territorial realities, contributing to a more expensive Romanisation of the region (Bosio 1984: 20 ff.)

Even today, many of the modern roads and field systems in the Veneto follow Roman centuriation patterns, and are easily recognisable as such by the symmetry and linearity of their layout, whereas Roman roads can be recognised by milestones or funerary monuments erected along its routes. Such is the legacy of the Romans on the land.

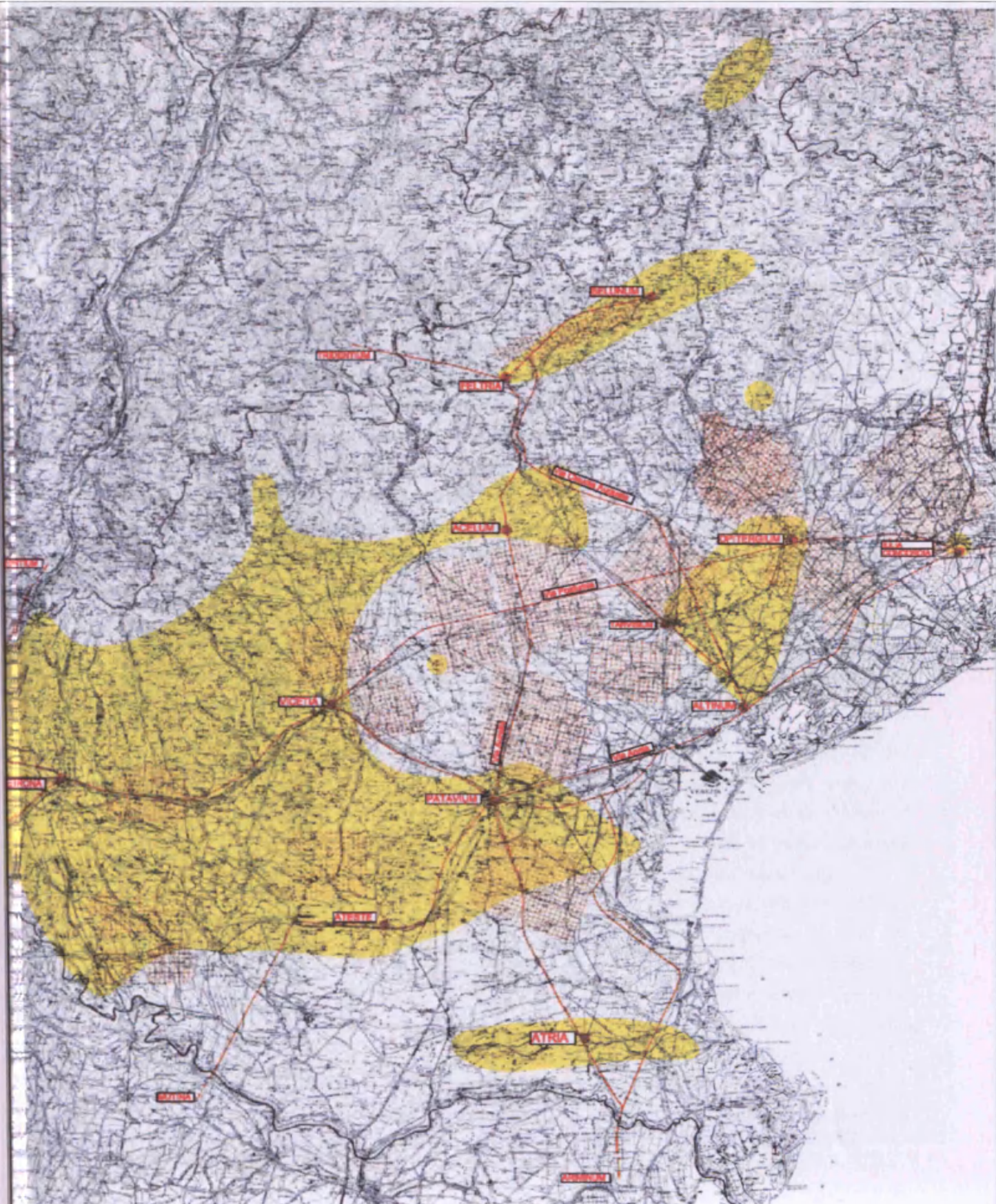


Fig. 1.4 Roman roads in the Veneto and their spatial relationship with Later Prehistoric settlements.
From Bosio et al. 1984 (eds.), page 51

1.2 The Venetic peoples

1.2.1. Venetic chronology

Alessandro Prosdocimi was the first scholar to propose a chronology for the Atestine culture (Este, see definition below in 1.3.2) in the 1880s; he was then the Superintendent of Antiquities in Padua and the first scholar to extensively explore the issue of Venetic-Euganean cultures. He conducted fieldwork in the cemeteries of Este and established a sequence of phases for the development of Venetic culture, the so called Atestine Periods (Periodi Atestini), ranging from the Early Iron Age to Romanisation: he based his division into periods upon the iconographic evolution of Situla art (see below) and pottery styles from looted and excavated burials in Este.

Other scholars such as Ghirardini, the then Director of the Este Museum, followed in Prosdocimi's footsteps at the turn of the 20th century, and other followers in the decades to come would accept his work as indisputable.

More recently, Peroni (Peroni et al.1975, 'Studi sulla cronologia delle civiltà di Este e Golasecca') proposed another relative chronological sequence, here presented in the left column, alongside a parallel chronology by Giulia Fogolari and Otto-Hermann Frey (1965) that supports the old-style division in Atestine Periods (on the right):

Dates BC	Peroni	Fogolari-Frey
350-200ca.	Phase 3E?	4 th Atestine Period
450-350	Phase 3D2	Late 3 rd Atestine Period
525-450	Phase 3D1	Mid 3 rd Atestine Period
575-525	Phase 3C	525 BC ca. Certosa phase
625-575	Phase 3B2	2 nd - 3 rd Atestine Periods transition
675-625	Phase 3B1	650 BC: Late 2 nd Atestine Period
700-675	Phase 3A	Mid 2 nd Atestine Period
740-700	Phase 2C	
800-775	Phase 2A	800-700 BC: Early 2 nd Atestine Period
775-740	Phase 2B	
900 BC	Phase 1	1 st Atestine period

(From Capuis 1993: 41)

Thus, the start of Venetic cultures proper is traditionally set for the late 10th- 9th century BC, or the 1st Atestine Period (Bianchin Cutton 2003a: 23). Scholars, however, have argued that the start of the Italian Iron Age ought to be pushed back to the 960s BC (Fogolari and Prosdocimi 198; Pacciarelli 1990).

Peroni's, Fogolari's and Frey's chronological inferences were, predictably enough, based on pottery sequences encountered mostly in funerary and ritual contexts in Este.

To what extent we are able to draw the line between the Bronze Age cultural horizon and the subsequent Iron Age 'Venetic' culture is still under discussion. Personally, I agree with recent theories advocating the relatively smooth transition from the Bronze to the Iron Ages (Malnati 2003a: 33) on the basis of the overall continuity in pottery sequences and burial customs (see below). On the other hand, if we are fond of nomenclatures we could call Bronze Age culture 'Protovenetic' or 'Frattesina culture'.

As to the term "Paleoveneti", I will purely report here that Loredana Capuis instigated a criticism of the traditional attribute of the Venetic population (Capuis 1993: 39-40), claiming that there are no written sources mentioning that term, nor are any other pre-Roman Italian populations called 'Palaeo-': there are no 'Paleopicenes' or 'Paleoligurians', for instance, so why should there be 'Paleoveneti'? I will not go into this debate in great detail, and will simply comment that the precise start of the development of Venetic culture or cultures is difficult to pin down.

We have reliable excavation data pertaining to Bronze Age settlements in the Southern and SW portion of the territory to support the continuity theory, with data supporting a relatively smooth transition from the Frattesina culture to Venetic culture in Este (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006) and the localised development of Padua, whereas this sort of knowledge is not available elsewhere (De Nardi 2007 and forthcoming b).

For the scope of this thesis, I will only take an absolute chronology into account, as I feel that it would be absurd to speak of '3rd Atestine period' when referring to, say, the chronology of sites as far afield as Lagole di Calalzo (45) or Altino (26, 27). In this respect it would be interesting to build a diachronic comparison between the dated evidence from Este contexts and distant areas such as the Alpine milieu of Lagole di Calalzo (45) and the lagoon environment of Altino (26-27)- see fig. 6.8, to see whether the development of pottery styles, settlement patterns and burial evolutions are in fact parallel or diverge in some respect: this exercise has not yet been attempted, but I will not attempt to accomplish this in the present thesis.

1.2.2 Shared features of the Venetic peoples

One way to reconstruct common or shared socio-cultural traits of the Venetic peoples is to look at their material culture and use of landscape in context: that is, to situate their lifeways and customs both in their chronological and geographical milieus; to situate them in the Italian Iron Age.

Notwithstanding the relative wealth of recent excavations and material culture studies, we do not yet possess the data necessary to make many inferences on the nature of the earliest Venetic society or groups (Bianchin Citton 2003a: 24). Italian scholars however agree that up until the 10th century BC the Venetic peoples were essentially a group of communities organised in social structures probably based on internal differentiations determined by ancestry, military prowess or control over the commerce and procurement of raw materials, manufactured items and so on (Locatelli 2003b: 54 et alii).

Similarly to the Etruscans then, Venetic peoples seemed to have a lavish culture focussed on social status, an advanced technological skill pool ranging from production of fine pottery and metalwork to bone and antler working, and an increasingly urbanised society. From the Etruscans, the Venetic people absorbed notions of urbanism, material culture (metalwork) and aspects of their culture such as language (see 1.2.3 below) (Capuis 2004: 130 ff.).

Insights into Venetic culture(s) can be obtained from their burial customs, habitation patterns, use of landscape and beliefs.

It is possible to argue that by the late 7th century BC the Venetic peoples were becoming an increasingly stratified society and a highly skilled culture engaging in lively commercial activities and producing highly sophisticated artistic expressions, to the extent of other contemporaneous Italic populations such as the Piceni, for instance (Locatelli 2003a: 48).

The cult sphere of the Venetic people not only bears witness to the individuality and high specificity of most cult places (cf. De Nardi 2007) but also sets it apart from other Italic and central European cultures for its unique 'pantheon' and highly distinctive votive objects (see chapter 4).

In terms of urbanism (see section 1.2.4 below), modern scholars have placed great emphasis on the role of Este and Padua in the development of Venetic culture, and the development of urbanism is no exception: they ascribe the rise and development of other centres such as Montebelluna and Vicenza to the influence of Este and Padua and attribute their rise and significance to the need of these two proto-centres to establish 'centri di smistamento' (redistribution foci) and 'zone-cerniera' with sub-alpine and alpine transits to

and from the Hallstatt and La Tène cultural areas (Locatelli 2003a: 46, De Nardi forthcoming b). Well deserved credit is however given to the independent and very significant role of Altino in the Venetian lagoon as a leading commercial centre (*emporium*).

1.2.3 Literacy

What distinguishes the Veneti from other contemporary populations north of the Po is their mastery of the art of writing from quite early on. It is commonly agreed that the beginnings of Venetic writing, a variation of the Etruscan script, must be traced back to a combination of external influence and independent local innovation (Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006: 546).

According to Marinetti, the earliest Venetic scripts (early 6th c. BC) did not use punctuation, on the model of northern Etruscan (Chiusi). By the end of the 6th century however, syllabic separation and punctuation appear, on the model of Southern Etruscan (Capuis 1993: 178; Marinetti 2003: 65). Whitehouse and Wilkins however argue that it is unwise to hypothesise an early Venetic script on the basis of three inscriptions, two of which not precisely dated (Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006: 542).

The main sources of Venetic inscriptions are Este Baratella (3), Lagole di Calalzo di Cadore (45) and Vicenza Piazzetta San Giacomo (31). The recovery of an astonishing quantity of bronze alphabetic tablets and writing styli recovered during the excavations of the Baratella shrine ascertained a strong link between ritual and writing, a one-off in contemporaneous Italic cultures, if not the ancient world: unlike other culture such as the Egyptian where writing school were associated with cult, in Baratella the very act of writing was sacred, and the model tablets bearing the alphabet were dedicated to the goddess Reitia.

Inscriptions on ladle handles, used in a sacred context and then ritually deprived of their utilitarian function by deliberate breakage occur at the shrine of Lagole (45), in the alpine region of the Cadore: they represent dedications to deities and find their place in the context of a masculine and possibly 'diplomatic' and boundary cult at a site situated along a major transit route between Austria and peninsular Italy.

Despite an overall homogeneity of scripts we appreciate regional differences: the Lagole (45) script differs from the Atestine and the Vicenza script, and the latter displays dissimilarities to the (albeit few) inscriptions from Altino (sites 26-27).

Moreover, the picture changes abruptly in the Lessini-Asiago area of the Northern Vicentino: the territory, a sort of grey area where the Venetic and "Raetic" cultural facies met, yielded votive inscriptions on antlers in the Raetic script and language (sites 32-35).

I do not think it likely that the Venetic script and alphabet originated entirely in Este and the spread elsewhere: it seems reasonable that regional developments occurred rather

independently and at different scales, although punctuation is consistent throughout the Veneto, which would support the theory of a common origin of the Venetic script (Whitehouse pers. comm.).

Another striking factor is the paucity of inscriptions from the northeast territory of the Vittorio Veneto area: despite the existence of quite a few votive deposits, if not substantial shrines¹ we do not have so much as a handful of inscriptions (see chapters 4 and 6) and they are not adequately published in mainstream literature, thereby creating an inaccurate bias towards the Po plain and south-eastern parts of the region. The same goes for the Pordenone- Udine territories in the Friuli, where a handful of inscriptions suggest that literacy spread in this area from the Venetic area to the west, and contained both Celtic and Venetic elements: grey ware cups bearing (possibly votive) Venetic inscriptions were retrieved from the De Blasio land in Montereale Valcellina (38) and inscribed pottery and a handful of laminae from other sites such as Ovaro and Verzegnis (Vitri 1996: 408, 421; Crevatin 2001: 115 *ff.*). Inscriptions from the Friuli are seldom considered and discussed in Venetic publications, again leading to 'false impressions' and misleading 'distributions' of evidence of writing.

Nonetheless I must point out that literacy does seem relatively under-developed in the Northern and Eastern parts of the Veneto: this 'negative' evidence could indeed be a consequence of the paucity and unsystematic recording and publication of archaeological data from this area, but it still offers food for thought.

The issue of literacy is extremely relevant in a discussion of Venetic votive deposits and cults, as sanctuaries constitute the most abundant source of Venetic inscriptions, followed by cemeteries and funerary art: furthermore, writing at Este Baratella (3) was likely to be part of the cult practices, if not a sacred practice in its own right (Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006: 546).

1.2.4 The rise of urbanism

In the traditional view, the stimulus for the rise of urbanism has been attributed to cultural contacts with the Etruscans, who entertained lively contacts with the South-western and central Venetic cultures by means of extensive trade and exchange as early as the 8th century BC (Capuis 1993: 183; 197 *ff.*; Capuis 2004: 132 *ff.*).

I embrace the more recent view that the development of early Iron Age centres stemmed primarily from independent local stimuli and in some cases followed patterns previously established by Bronze Age nuclei (Bianchin Citton 2003c: 29). According to Luigi Malnati (Malnati 2003a: 33), the start of Venetic urbanism came about in Este and Padova,

¹ See Villa di Villa (42) below

or at any rate in the South-western fringe of the Veneto: it is an archaeologically established fact that the two centres surged to the rank of '*capoluoghi*' (central places) in the Early Iron Age after the decline of the important Bronze Age foci of Frattesina di Fratta Polesine (Rovigo) and Montagnana-Borgo San Zeno in the 9th century BC (Capuis 1993: 32-33). In the case of Padova, it is now commonly recognised that the Iron Age centre developed along the lines of a Late Bronze Age settlement (Blanchin Cifton 2003a: 24; Malnati 2003a: 33 ff.).

Recent excavations determined the contemporaneous existence of various other centres such as: the 'castellieri' of Gradisca sul Cosa (Udine) and Palse di Porcia (PN) in the Friuli; a recently discovered settlement site associated with the circles of tumuli in Mel di Cadore (Belluno) in the upper Piave valley (50); Castion d'Erbè (Verona), Oppeano (Verona) and Gazzo Veronese in the West; Treviso (Piazza San Pio X), Oderzo (Via Savonarola) in the middle Piave Valley and finally Concordia Sagittaria (VE) in the northern Venetian hinterland (Malnati 2003a: 33-34).

The recovery of metalwork in the River Sile near Treviso bears witness to an extent of human activity in the Bronze Age (see chapter four for further discussion) and may signify the importance of this river in the development of local social groups.

The issue of the origins of the Venetic centres named above for which no Bronze Age evidence exists, those not belonging to the topographical and cultural facies of Frattesina, is still problematic. Where do we trace the initial development of eastern-Venetic and northern sites? In my opinion, the issue of the beginnings and development of local identities in the protohistoric Veneto is inevitably enigmatic owing to the difficulty of establishing a consistent cultural sequence for the territory as a whole.

Early settlements exploited the specific topographical features of the land. They served purposes of habitation, defence, containment and other practicalities. These early sites comprised nuclei of rectangular huts with internal hearths and double-sloping roofs made of perishable materials. Units were either clustered within earthworks (the castellieri in the Northern part of the territory and along the Isonzo river and in the Carnia, both of which in the Friuli) or laid out in relation to river banks in the plains. The latter is the case of centres like Padua along the Brenta and Bacchiglione rivers, the Adige in Este, the Tartaro canal in Oppeano and Gazzo, the Sile in Treviso, the Monticano in Oderzo and the Piave in Montebelluna.

The settled areas were often separated from the water courses by palisades or other types of dams or terracing (Capuis 1993: 32) In humid areas, hut floors were laid upon thick

timber platforms to insulate the inhabitants from soil dampness (Bianchin Cifton 2003a: 25; Malnati 2003a: 33-34).

The significant role played by rivers in the development of the earliest protourbanism is agreed among scholars, who stress their importance not only as early cult places but also as natural boundaries and cultural landmarks and argue that certain centres, developing later and to a lesser scale, did so partly because they were not located advantageously close to water sources (Capuis 1993: 33).

The Mid Iron Age, roughly the 6th century BC sees the birth of other centres such as Vicenza (6th century BC), Aquileia and Altino (Malnati 2003d: 62).

As social complexity increased throughout the 6th century, 'cities' such as Padua and Oderzo become more definitely structured, with orthogonal street systems, divided into main and secondary roads with rows of buildings. Also, the rise of specialised craftsmen and the more extensively practised pottery and metalworking technologies would have required specific locations with kilns and other facilitating factors -i.e. the 'potters' quarter' in the Fondo Albrizzi in Este- (Ruta Serafini 2003b: 58) An antecedent of this kind of industrial quarter is given by specialised areas in Frattesina and Montagnana (Capuis 1993).

Modern scholars have placed great emphasis on the role of Este and Padua in the development of Venetic culture, and the development of urbanism is no exception: they ascribe the rise and development of other centres such as Montebelluna and Vicenza to the influence of Este and Padua and attribute their rise and significance to the need of these two proto-centres to establish 'centri di smistamento' (redistribution foci) and 'zone-cerniera' with sub-alpine and alpine transits to and from the Hallstatt and La Tène cultural areas (Locatelli 2003a: 46, De Nardi forthcoming b). Some well deserved credit is however given to the independent and very significant role of Altino in the Venetian lagoon as a leading commercial centre (*emporium*).

It is my belief that Venetic centres were indeed likely to function in quite autonomous ways throughout their life: it is simply not plausible to attribute the initial stimulus of protourbanism and internal organisation solely to one or two centres that would not have necessarily been comparable topographically and/or geographically.

The implications of settlement analysis for my research lies mainly in the fact that it is possible to distinguish different typologies and purposes of votive deposits and shrines in light of their link to settlement sites. I divided Venetic sacred locales into three broad groups according to their relationship with habitation sites: first of all those that were either essentially urban or extra urban, or simply peripheral to nearby settlement sites or commercial foci (*emporium*); then those that were situated far from inhabited nuclei and were

established for other reasons, such as those encountered in isolated rural locations; thirdly we come across territorial shrines that served different communities and were possibly pilgrimage destinations and meeting points for foreigners, travellers and could have housed commercial and diplomatic transactions.

1.2.5 Venetic cemeteries and burial data

This section takes into account the burial data we have for the Venetic peoples in a chronological review, and offers a critical appraisal of the reliability of such data, due to inevitable excavation and data collection biases.

Overall, it is Este and Padua that supplied most of what is known of the funerary record, but we must bear in mind that very rarely, and only very recently, have other cemeteries elsewhere in the Veneto been explored systematically, or extensively. In the case of Mel (49), considerable damage had already been caused by early illegal excavations among the 'tomb circles' when archaeologists set out to explore the site in 1959 (Capuis 1993: 163).

The great gap between Atestine and other Venetic cemeteries is such that the former materials and sequences are well known and established, with much data from the Belluno and the Treviso districts lost or unpublished. Regrettably, we deal with an arduous task when we seek to reconstruct demographic, social and ritual inferences for this part of the territory: we cannot infer social stratifications, beliefs and mortuary trends from [often] sterile and poorly presented museum collections of materials unable to tell their story, whose graves they accompanied, why they were associated with a particular individual or families, and where they were buried: they cannot recreate the meaningful context of death and burial.

The problem is worsened by a perceived lack of interest by the authorities, which means we must rely on antiquarian sources and historic documents to discover, and appreciate the complexity of, cemeteries such as the 'Ai Frati' cemetery in Vittorio Veneto (Arnosti 1983), excavated and immediately destroyed during construction of the 19th century theatre without so much as a systematic record of what had been unearthed where: the excavation yielded a wealth of La Tène fibulae, torques and iron axes (Arnosti 2000: 21), some of which are now part of private collections (figs. 1.5-1.6), and the Brazzoduro burials (brief mention below and full discussion in appendix 3).



Figure 1.5. Torques from the Ai Frati cemetery, Vittorio Veneto



Figure 1.6. Sphinx fibula from Ai Frati. Photos courtesy of the Gruppo Archeologico del Cenedese (GAC)

Figure 1.7. The Red barrel (56). Photograph by author

This deplorable situation has affected a large part of the region, and much precious insight into the way people perceived and celebrated the act of dying throughout the land is now in the realm of guesswork. With such a gap in the archaeological record, it is hard to decide how representative, typical or atypical the Atestine and Patavine records are of Venetic mortuary customs (De Nardi 2007).

Let us nonetheless explore the existing evidence for the development of mortuary customs.

The predominant burial rite during the Late Bronze Age had been cremation, which appears to continue in the Iron Age: the evidence comes predominantly from Este, but new burial data from other sites are gradually getting published.

In the late 9th and early 8th centuries BC we do not yet come across remarkable signs of complex social stratifications in Venetic burials, and we tend to find groups of graves

marked by unworked stone blocks and housing multiple burials, maybe family groups. The ashes were enclosed in bi-conical bronze urns (*urne biconiche*) and accompanied by simple personal ornaments (Malnati 2003b: 42).

However, already at the start of the 8th century there are notable exceptions in the Este Pelà cemetery and in Gazzo Veronese (Malnati 2003a: 34); in Gazzo we have a few cremation graves yielding prestige goods pointing to members of a warrior elite or prominent members of the community: there is one burial containing a ritually bent antenna sword (*spada ad antenne*), an imported object from the transalpine Hallstatt milieu (Malnati 2003b: 43).

It is later in the 8th BC that gender and status symbols emerged in burial patterns just as increasing social complexity generated more diverse grave goods.

In Mel, the burial area (49) expanded (fig. 1.7), with newer graves containing an increasingly varied range of personal ornaments (in female depositions) and weapons (in male burials).



Figure 1.7. The Mel tumuli (49). Photograph by author

During this time we get a significantly larger number of prominent graves in the Ex Casa di Ricovero cemetery in Northern Este where we find ritually broken swords and a couple of battle axes, together with individual family burial areas yielding prestige weapons and a beautifully-crafted bronze vase decorated with relief tin ducks (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006: 42 ff.; Malnati 2003b: 42) Interesting is the high proportion of tombs with successive phases of use and the high number of women and children (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006: 47). It is also the Ricovero Group (ibid: 46 ff.) that allows us to draft the development of Venetic mortuary customs in Este from the 8th century BC to Romanisation. I will discuss the role and possible significance of the Ricovero cemetery in my interpretation and assessment of two case studies, Este Colle del Principe (7) and Este Benvenuti (8) in chapter 5A on the Po plain.

7th century BC graves in Este and Padua cemeteries belonging to elite family groups were periodically reopened to make room for more individuals, stressing the importance of kinship (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006: 46 *ff.*) The ancestral cemetery of Ricovero is established in this period, and in the middle 7th century the first burials pertaining to the Benvenuti group (8) occur, marking an area of elite cemeteries where women were buried with lavish grave goods indicating high status (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006: 44 *ff.*).

In the 6th BC, the Boldù-Dolfin cemetery, again in Este, produced those which came to be regarded as the peak of Venetic artistic expressions: the Situla Art (see below) (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006: 336 *ff.*) Situlae were used to enclose the remains of children as young as six months (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006: 48).

The 6th century BC also sees the first decorated stelai from cemeteries in Padova and Gazzo (Colombara) in the Lower Veronese (Ruta Serafini 2003b: 60). These marked the burial places of influential male members of the community. The deceased were enclosed in stone lined cists in Este and Mel, whereas the cists were lined with wood in Padova, Oppeano and in the two known Altino cemeteries, Le Brustolade and Albertini. The most outstanding Altino graves from this period yielded whole horse skeletons (figs. 7-8) alongside the remains of high status men.

Horse sacrifice and horse burials also occurred in Este, Padua, Oppeano (Verona), while a few more have recently been excavated in Oderzo (Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992: 58; Ruta Serafini pers. comm.). This is highly significant, as those wealthy enough to own horses were likely to be ascribed a prestige role, and this social aspect may be relevant to and inform the symbolic significance of the horse in local cults and traditions. In chapter 4 I will explore in greater depth the significant role of horses in Venetic rituals.



Figure 1.8. Horse burial from Le Brustolade, Altino. From Tombolani and Scarfi 1987



Figure 1.9. Horse burials in Le Brustolade, Altino. From Tombolani and Scarfi 1987

Horses may also be the link between Venetic and Roman cultures in certain parts of the region (refer to appendix 3 for a discussion of the horse bones recovered in a Roman ritual context at the foot of the Monte Altare cult place- 40, below), a sign that certain features of Venetic ideology and customs were long-lived and overlapped with traditionally Roman *mores* (see the Brazzoduro account in chapter 5, section C and appendix 3).

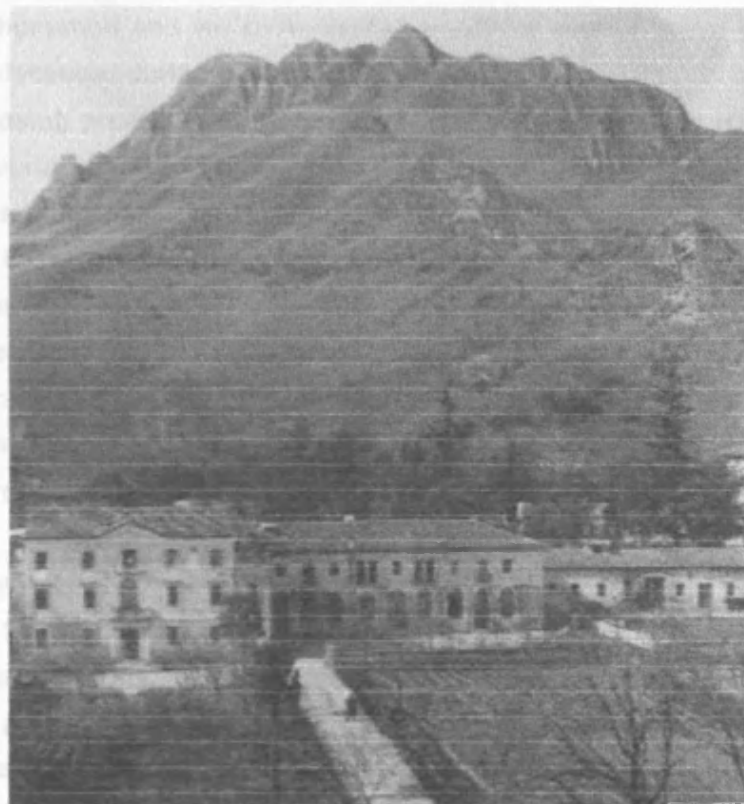


Figure 1.10. Villa Brazzoduro at the foot of Monte Altare (40), location of a (Roman?) burial site yielding horse remains. Photograph by Giulio Marino

Ancient sources such as Strabo² mention the Veneti, the famous horse breeders, and claim that they sacrificed horses to the Greek hero Diomedes (Strabo, *On Geography*): this is only a valuable piece of information when buttressed by archaeological evidence. Nevertheless we shall see below how significant horses and their symbolism could have been in the Veneto, especially in relation to the Adriatic centre of Altino.

² Strabo, *On Geography* Book 5

Overall, graves show signs of increasing social complexity and evidence of the expansion of the commercial routes along which Venetic peoples traded their goods and acquired imported items, both in the form of raw materials (silver from the Noricum, Baltic amber and so on) and as finished articles (fibulae, pottery, jewellery, cauldrons, personal ornaments etc.) Burials that are neither particularly lavish nor humble seem to refer to a growing middle-class with access to crafts, trade and exchange (Ruta Serafini 2003b: 58-59).

During the 5th and 4th centuries, and later on toward Romanisation in the 2nd BC there was a shift to inhumation and we come across wealthier sets of grave goods to represent the status of the deceased during his or her lifetime.

With increasing pressures from 'Celtic' groups in Northern Italy (Gambacurta 2003b: 80 ff.), Venetic burial customs reflected external influences: the increasing number of La Tène weapons as grave goods bears witness to changing times. This was particularly felt in the North and East Veneto, boundary areas with the La Tène and Carnia regions respectively, where evidence of 'multicultural' fashions, expressions and practices had always been a feature of local material culture, long before Este and the South.

The last members of the once powerful Venetic elites favour multi-period burials, to stress the belonging to long standing family groups in a time of growing social stratification and of cultural transformation. Inhumation was the exclusive burial rite by the 3rd century BC.

With Romanisation, the Venetic elite became more and more concerned with the practical need to belong to the new social and political reality of Rome, both for political and economic reasons. Following my study of the material culture, I find that the impact of Romanisation on people's identity is less clear-cut and seems to vary greatly throughout the region, taking place earlier, and more smoothly in urbanised areas, and more slowly and patchily in rural areas (see chapter 5, section D below for a discussion of the Romanisation of the Alpine area).

Officially, things did go smoothly for the Veneti on the whole. Their perception of themselves, undoubtedly encouraged by the Roman authorities was one of 'associates' and allies of the Republic rather than subjects; this reflected on the way of life and death of the Venetic elites and 'middle classes', who soon adopted a funerary iconography close to central Italian taste, with funerary inscriptions starting off bilingual at first, and subsequently, during the Late Republican period, occurring almost exclusively in the Latin language and alphabet, at least in the Eastern Veneto (Tirelli 2003b: 97; Marinetti 1999: 89-90).

The implications of burial data in the study of votive deposits offered by my thesis are complex. First of all, the discrepancy between the objects found in Venetic cemeteries and those found in Venetic shrines at the peak of Venetic cultural development is remarkable (see chapter 4).

Up to the 7th – 6th centuries BC, both grave goods and votives mostly consisted of personal objects that would have been used by the deceased and/or the dedicator in their lifetime (Capuis 1993: 171 *ff.*). From the 6th century BC onwards shrines and votive deposits were established throughout the region, making the act of dedicating objects to the deities more purposeful and almost 'systematic': people increasingly dedicated purposely-made votives such as laminae, bronzetti, writing tablets, simpula (ladles), and so on, catering for local needs, trends and peculiarities.

1.2.6 Situla Art

The main artistic expression of the Iron Age Veneto is without any doubt Situla Art. This artistic expression, generating in the head of the Adriatic (Frey 1969) found a highly original trend within the aristocratic Atestine world (Capuis 1993). The most famous specimen was unearthed in grave Benvenuti 126 in Este: it is the so called Benvenuti Situla (fig. 1.11), a bucket-shaped bronze vessel containing the remains of a mother and child (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006: 445). It has been dated to 600 BC ca. and displays three decorated fascias depicting a narrative sequence of scenes taken from both everyday life and special activities, such as harvesting, ploughing, processions, libations and a boxing match (Locatelli 2003a). Other situlae depict both secular and symbolic actions such as hunting (by now a secondary practice, no longer required to procure food), warfare and civic or religious processions; some others also depict lovemaking and scenes taken from a symposium repertoire (Capuis 1993: 152 *ff.*).



Figure 1.11. The Benvenuti situla. From Malnati and Gamba 2003 (eds.)

Examples of situla art are also found on other bronze artefacts such as the Venetic *cinturoni* (wide belts).

1.3 The 'Veneti': peoples under glass?

I will now trace a chronological history of Venetic studies and outline the main works of archaeological literature on the subject.

1.3.1 An 'archaeology' of Venetic archaeology

In the 1870s and 1880s the Boldù Dolfin and Pelà cemeteries of Este were first systematically explored (Capuis 1993: 35-36). These excavations led to decades of interest in Este and its cemeteries and cult places. Also at the end of the 19th century landowner Baratella and Alessandro Prosdocimi extensively excavated the Venetic shrine within the bounds of his land, subsequently systematically explored by Ghirardini (Prosdocimi 1882a and b, Prosdocimi 1888, 1889 and 1890; Ghirardini 1888a-f).

Elsewhere in the early 1950s, a number of sites were discovered and/or excavated using stratigraphic analysis whenever feasible: this led to the discovery of the important sub-alpine stipe of Lagole di Calalzo (45) and the excavation of the tomb circles in Mel di Cadore (49) in the late 1950s (Capuis 1993: 40).

The real breakthrough in Venetic archaeology came in the 1970s, when scientific excavation campaigns began to take place all over the region. This decade saw the exploration of several Venetic centres and sites, namely Baratella (3) and Caldevigo (7) in Este, Villa di Villa in Cordignano (42), Oderzo in the Treviso province and the various settlement nuclei of Padua, such as Ex-Pilsen (11, 12), Via Rialto (16), Via Patriarcato, Via Santa Sofia and Questura (Ruta Serafini 2003a: 37). See map **E3** on page 324 for these.

The 1980s continued to see great progress in the state of knowledge of Venetic culture, thanks to excavations in Padua, Oderzo, Monte Altare (40) and Altino (26 and 27). The 1990s saw the publication of key studies on Venetic religion and ritual by Mastrocinque and Maioli and Pascucci (Pascucci 1990, Maioli & Mastrocinque 1992, Mastrocinque 1994a and b).

The twenty-first century saw a substantial advance in Venetic studies: the Este cemeteries of Ricovero has been recently excavated and thoroughly studied (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006 eds.), whereas our knowledge of Venetic cult has been expanded through the excavation and research of the sites of Meggiaro (6), Villa di Villa (42), Altino La Fornace (26) and Monte Altare (40).

Also, our knowledge of Este's mortuary record has been significantly advanced by the publication of *Este II* (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006 (eds.)).

1.3.2 Key publications

Thorough studies of Venetic votive deposits were published in the 1980s and 1990s, largely in the monograph and 'inventory' formats, presenting digests of the currently known sites and their artefacts. The most prominent works are Capuis 1993, Chieco Bianchi 1988, Mastrocinque 1993, Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992 and Pascucci 1990.

In 2001 the late Giulia Fogolari, together with Giovanna Gambacurta published a fully illustrated volume dedicated to the shrine of Lagole di Calalzo (45), but the contextual analysis of the stipe and of the material culture contained therein was limited, with only passing references to the topography and the evocative nature of the locale where the deposit must have been situated.

What these publications lacked, however, was a holistic approach to the understanding of a site, regional differences and material culture patterns: for instance, new settlement data would be presented as if they were a detached phenomenon and, instead of being placed in the broader site picture, they were mostly compared and contrasted with other settlement data from elsewhere in the Venetic area; the complex reality of a site and its objects in their cultural entirety was seldom explored.

These findings were undoubtedly influential and instructive, fully worthy of dissemination, but all too often the authors seemed too preoccupied with the task of presenting them in an accurate and systematic manner to actually interpret and discuss them to any length. The readers were presented with a meticulously organised array of data, catalogue entries and relative chronological classifications of the artefacts, but without a context, a backdrop to the 'action' against which to locate or make sense of the objects.

Thus, these works were impeccable databases of new contributions to knowledge of the Veneto, albeit lacking real innovation and enthusiasm. Moreover, and more significantly, the materiality of artefacts, processes and places was never touched upon.

Sadly however, the reports from those excavations that were perceived as "secondary" by the Soprintendenza never did get published, or more than a decade after fieldwork (Monte Altare (40), two campaigns in 1989 and inadequately published as a book chapter in 2005 (Gorini and Gambacurta 2005); Castello Roganzuolo (36), Presette/ Prà della Stalla (37) and Scomigo (39) were never published; and so on).

Much as the more recent efforts have sought to contextualise shrines and votive deposits in socio-economic terms (i.e. the great emphasis on the suburban shrine of Meggiaro (6) and the 'commercial' sanctuary of La Fornace in Altino (26) and the en route shrine of Lagole di Calalzo (45), they still fail to recognise the potential symbolic and social significance of the topographical setting of cult centres. Keen attention is nonetheless paid to internal site logistics, where different sacred areas are scrutinised (but not always interpreted at length) to gain a better idea of the function of shrines. Furthermore, the recovery of actual structural remains pertaining to cult in Este Meggiaro (6) and Altino La Fornace (26) appeals to the classically trained Venetic scholars who perceive structures and temples as the quintessential features of a cult place. In the case of La Fornace (26), information panels in the Museo Archeologico di Altino reported the discovery of a small feature dated to the 11th-10th centuries BC and interpreted as 'cult related' (Museum information panel), which would make La Fornace the earliest cult place in the Veneto.

More recently, the broad location of sites in relation to one another (in the case of the Este and Padua shrines, incidentally) and to settlement sites has been taken into consideration (Maggiani 2002: 78 ff.): again, the shrines are mainly considered part of the greater urban landscape, and as such as part of the processes of urbanisation and urban organisation. When an argument pushes further into landform analysis, this is often limited to an emphasis on the relevance of rivers and on their role as central features in urban development (the Adige in the case of Este). What this approach lacks, albeit more adventurous and insightful in its scope than the traditional outlook, is a systematic attempt to contextualise all Venetic votive deposits, even those that are not obviously linked to a protourban or urban reality and simply exist in function of their own intrinsic sacredness. Again, a strong gap exists in the state of research is evident in the dichotomy between the privileged "power-shrines" of southwest Veneto and the lesser known or more recently discovered sacred locales of the northern and eastern parts (see reference to Monte Altare (40), above).

Overall, and apart from the research bias towards some locations rather than others, we can get a sense of what was and still is missing from the current theoretical framework in which votive deposits are studied: a spatial and cultural contextualisation of the sites as 'places'. Another drawback of those studies is that they favoured the impression of dealing with a culture 'under glass': literally, if we consider the permanence of so many Venetic relics in museum display cases, but also because these peoples are presented as somewhat detached from contemporary cultures in the Italian peninsula. Recently, an assessment of the relationship and of the nature of Venetic contacts with the Etruscans has been published, but its main flaws lie in its limitation to the Po Plain and Este, and the treatment of social impact of Etruscans on Venetic society (albeit admittedly that of central southern Veneto) is of a speculative nature (Capuis 2004). The article's focus on non-specialist readership leads to some risky generalisations:

"The culture of the Veneti (..), although it had its own specific identity, it owed much to the Etruscans, such as the production of manufactured goods and, above all, its ideology and institutions" (Capuis 2004: 132, translation by T.M. Hartmann).

Efforts are being made to understand the extent and nature of liaisons between the Veneti and neighbouring 'Celtic' and 'Raetic' peoples, although this, as with the Etruscans, tends to be restricted to the trade and exchange arena, and not expanded onto the social, ideological and ethnic identity spheres.

Lastly, an in-depth study of the ideological relationship with the Hallstatt and La Tène groups beyond the Alps, but ideologically and geographically nearer to the Northern Veneti than the Etruscan reality in the Po Plain, has not yet been attempted. I have already started making comparisons with transalpine Bronze and Iron Age rituals and their landscape settings in the course of my research, but not yet to the extent of being able to make informed observations between these cultural 'horizons'. The present study, therefore, does not seek to provide an investigation into the cross-cultural interaction of the Veneti with their contemporaries: this is scope for future work.

1.3.3. An assessment of the subject matter and the bias in current research

As seen above, many appraisals of Venetic culture still underestimate the unique character and cultural expressions characterising the various sections of the Veneto. Despite the vast expanse of a territory encompassing such diverse and distinct geographical milieus, the conventional approach shows little appreciation of local features. As a result of this

methodological 'standardisation', potential clues pertaining to the character and significance of individual loci are overlooked (De Nardi 2007 and forthcoming b).

There appears to be an enduring trend in modern Italian academia to impose arbitrary hierarchies of importance to sites and votive deposits, hence:

Il primo [santuario, di Baratella], affacciato sulla sponda dell'Adige, due chilometri a sud-est della città [Este], è destinato a diventare il *principale* polo di aggregazione religiosa del popolo dei Veneti, *accomunato* dalla venerazione per la divinità femminile [Reitia] dagli ampi attributi (...).

The first [sanctuary, that of Baratella], situated on the bank of the river Adige and 2 km Southeast of the settlement area, was to become the *most important* ritual focus of the Veneti, *united* in the worship of the goddess of many attributes [Reitia] (...).

(Ruta Serafini 2003b: 60). My translation and emphasis.

This excerpt conveys the idea of the longstanding bias toward the Este cult centre (3): while I fully appreciate and recognise the important role this shrine had in its territory and for the inhabitants of ancient Este, it is hazardous to generalise and simply assume that *all* Venetic peoples would have felt its influence in the same way. Similarly, such an approach does not take into account the likely, if not certain variety of ritual expressions throughout the land, nor does it allow for local deities and the symbolic importance of place-specific cults in the identity of ancient communities.

This attitude originated in the 1880s at the dawn of Venetic studies: at that time, pioneering scholars Prosdocimi and Ghirardini (Prosdocimi 1882a, 1882b, 1888, 1889, 1890; Ghirardini 1888a-f) developed stances that saw Padua and Este as the hegemonic Venetic centres par excellence, the loci where all cultural innovations, technologies, social complexities and cult expressions originated and whence said innovations and ideologies were 'distributed' to less complex and underdeveloped parts of the ancient territory (Capuis 1999: 153-4). Regretfully, echoes of this approach still linger in contemporary scholarship, and affect the methods by which votive deposits and shrines are studied. The variety of Venetic cult places is one of the factors that make their study so fascinating.

Aside from the protourban and subsequently urban realities of Este and Padua, and with a notable exception in Vicenza, which displays strong links to the cult milieu of Este (Zaghetto 2001: 307-308), (see fig. 1.12) the archaeological record shows that the nature, extent, time scale and intensity of cult expressions and deliberate episodes such as ritual depositions, animal sacrifice and so on were extremely diverse throughout the ancient land (Capuis 1999: 153).

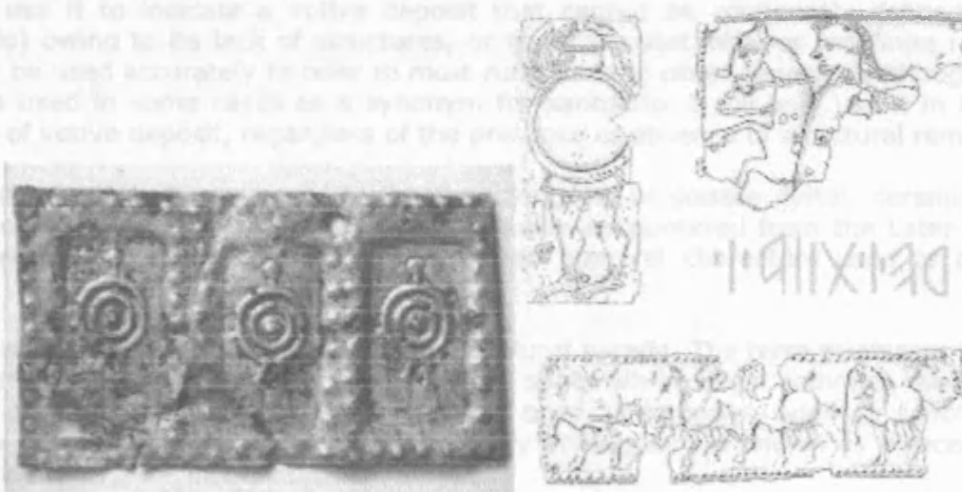


Figure 1.12. Laminæ from Vicenza (left) and from Este Baratella (right). From Zaghetto 2002b and Maioli and Mastrocinque 1990

Patterns are often hard to recognise. In some cases however, similarities do occur: in the case of hilltop sites for instance, we encounter parallel site chronologies and similar basic votive types, but when we look closer we perceive discrepancies in votive iconography, their relative chronology and possibly unrelated destination and purpose (De Nardi 2003).

There is almost no way of knowing whether the several unnamed deities worshipped at so many rural *stipi* were in any way connected in a sort of Venetic pantheon. We cannot establish whether there were ever any formal conventions, traditions or seasonality factors underpinning cult activities at rural sites, unlike Este, and possibly Vicenza, where there seems to be an element of control in cult places and practices (see section 6.4.2 in chapter 6).

All the evidence from the rural Venetic areas comes from often fortuitous and unsystematic recoveries in the field, very often in locations where centuries of agricultural activities have changed the soil morphology and stratigraphy beyond repair.

1.3.1 Glossary

- **Atestine:** adjective. Pertaining or referring to the ancient Venetic centre of Este. It derives from the Latin name *Ateste*.
- **Patavine:** adjective. Pertaining or referring to the ancient Venetic site of Padua (Padova). From the Latin *Patavium*.
- **Stipe:** (Italian) feminine singular noun (aka *stipe votiva*), plural *stipi*. Literally, this term designates a deposition of objects in a specific or unspecified context; however, Italian

¹ Reference from Falcó Baratella and Zaghetto 2003: 216–217.

scholars use it to indicate a votive deposit that cannot be confidently defined a 'shrine' (*santuario*) owing to its lack of structures, or to its unsubstantial or indefinite nature. The term can be used accurately to refer to most rural Venetic ritual deposits. Although the term has been used in some cases as a synonym for *santuario*, I will only use it in its primary meaning of votive deposit, regardless of the presence or absence of structural remains.

- **Sortes** (Latin). Singular: *sors*. Small rectangular or square metal, ceramic or antler plaques used in mantic and oracular cults, usually encountered from the Later prehistoric period onwards. Sortes normally bear inscribed numeral characters used to predict the future.

- **Sacellum**: (Latin) neutral singular noun, plural *sacella*. The term originates in Classical literature³ on cult and defines a roofless sacred space where ritual activities take place, like a sort of open-air temple cella. Synonyms are: *open-air temenos*, *open-air sanctum* and so on. I.e. a part of the newly excavated sanctuary at Meggiaro is known as a *sacellum* in the Italian literature.

- **Votive**: (English). I will use this term to refer to votive objects in general. By votive object I mean any item deliberately dedicated to deities and deposited in a specific ritual locale with the intention of appeasing a deity, asking for their protection, or simply to avert malevolent forces, bad luck and poor health. In addition to these motivations, worshippers could donate votives as a consequence of a received grace from a deity or deities, such as healing from an illness, having a prosperous harvest or healthy livestock.

1.4 Conclusion

Having provided an overview of the Venetic territory and an essential outline of the main traits of Venetic culture, I shall presently introduce the issue of 'humanistic' landscape archaeology with its spatial- analytical and perceptual dimensions as found in recent Anglo-Saxon archaeological literature.

After a discussion of the theoretical and methodological implications of landscape archaeology, we shall consider the main typologies and characteristics of Venetic stipi (votive deposits, see definition above) in chapter 4.

³ Reference from Ruta Serafini and Sainati 2002: 216-217.

Chapter 2. Trends and theories in the study of past (and present) landscapes

This chapter aims to provide a theoretical background to my research and contextualise it in the fields of landscape archaeology and humanistic geography and landscape studies; it also drafts various interpretations of cultural or meaningful landscapes found in prehistoric, protohistoric and historic contexts in modern academia.

Section 2.1 provides a background to my work and drafts the research path leading to the present thesis.

Section 2.2 provides an overview of recent and contemporary theories and approaches the person-environment relationship in archaeology and human geography, the limitations of current stances in the study of the person-environment relationship in archaeology and a case study illustrating the development of the study of landscape with changing archaeological schools of thought.

Section 2.3 offers a brief overview of the conflicting concepts of landscape, mapping and photography in human and cultural geography and cultural studies; 2.4 offers a synthesis of approaches to landscape in archaeology; 2.5 deals with the topic of landscape in historical archaeology and illustrates some of the concepts I draw upon in this thesis.

Section 2.6 offers an overview of the most relevant literature in a variety of fields: archaeology of cult and religion, landscape archaeology, votive deposits studies per se and in relation to landscape.

Section 2.7 deals with the topic of Geographical Information Systems and their application to humanistic landscape studies in archaeology.

Concluding sections 2.8 and 2.9 bring together the arguments of the entire chapter in a discussion of the potential benefits, pitfalls and new avenues of knowledge given by past cultural landscape studies.

2.1 Background to my work

I have been involved in the study of two Venetic *stipi votive* in the Treviso province since my second year as an undergraduate. What puzzled, and fascinated me at the same time, was the striking difference I perceived between these rural sites and the famous Atestine and South-western Venetic shrines constituting 95% of the sites published at the time.

I primarily investigated the reasons why two sacred locales (Monte Altare and Col Castelir of Villa di Villa, 40 and 42) had not been monumentalised or at any rate visibly and permanently altered by structures or buildings in the Roman period, despite the remarkable

quantity of votives recovered at both sites. This became more intriguing when, years later, I became aware of the fact that pre-Roman shrines elsewhere had been monumentalised at some point during or after Romanisation (Baratella (3), Vicenza Piazzetta S. Giacomo (31), Altino La Fornace (26), Altino Canevere (27): Baggio Bernardoni 2002, Capuis, L. 1999, Zaghetto 2002 et al.). Furthermore, I wondered why the hills (40 and 42) that were allegedly enclosed by a single rampart near the hilltop had automatically been ascribed the status of '*castellieri*', defensive or fortified settlements, when there was no sound archaeological evidence pointing toward this fact (Arnosti 1983).

In the course of my Masters' degree I did some research on Iron Age hillforts in Southeast England, which displayed striking similarities to sites such as Monte Altare (40). I noted that sites such as Harrow Hill and Chanctonbury Hill (Forde-Johnston 1976, Collis 1981, Hill 1995, Hamilton and Manley 2001 et al.) had also been interpreted as exclusively defensive sites even though there was no hard evidence pointing towards warfare at some of the sites (which is attested at other locations such as Maiden Castle and Danebury, see Bowden and McOmish 1987): interpretation often relied on uncertain evidence of incursions or hostilities for the period the sites were in use.

At many sites, pits were excavated that produced evidence of ritual activities interpreted as geared towards the reproduction of social complexities or the symbolic protection of a group establishing and using the sites, as well as stored foodstuffs and grains for utilitarian use: this happened at Mount Caburn in East Sussex with its one hundred pits containing a mixture of foodstuffs and ritually altered or non-utilitarian materials (Hamilton and Manley 2001: 27); also at The Trundle, then again at Harrow Hill, Harting Beacon, Chanctonbury Ring with its large votive pit; Moel Hirradug where archaeologists discovered the likely burning of a rampart as part of a ritual; Blewburton Hill in Berkshire with its horse skeletons located at the entrance to the "fort"; then Hambledon Hill and Scratchbury (Bowden and McOmish 1987: 79; 1989: 13 ff.). Moreover, many such sites were 'fenced off' by earthwork systems that would have proved useless in case of real emergencies or attacks or even isolated the defenders and impeded successful defensive effort due to a complex multivallated system of banks and ditches. The site of Wolstonbury in Sussex even had an internal ditch and external bank that would have made attempts to defend the site ineffective (Hamilton and Manley 2001).

Therefore, it seemed as if some of them were not defensive hillforts at all, or at least not exclusively: Cunliffe agrees on this point (Cunliffe 1984) although primarily interpreting such sites as defensive settlements, and ascribing the lack of substantial habitation remains to intermittent use (Hamilton and Manley 2001). Even the ramparts or earthworks could



have served a partly or largely symbolic function (Bowden and McOmish 1987: 77, 80; Bowden and McOmish 1989: 13; Hamilton and Manley 2001: 30 ff.)

It occurred to me that a similar situation could have occurred in the Northeast Veneto. I started wondering why three, or possibly four out of the substantial number of hills in a geographically restricted area had been selected as sacred sites: I also wondered why the top may have been singled out from the surrounding topography by means of barriers, or ramparts that would have served no practical purpose, as in the case of Monte Altare if we are to accept the theory that sees vegetation rings on the upper slope as a sign of a buried ditch or bank, altering the growth of shrubs along the contours of a buried feature (Arnosti pers. comm.).



Figure 2.1. Monte Altare, once interpreted as a hillfort

I thought that Venetic hill top locales may have had a particular ritual significance, and that perhaps their uniqueness consisted in their geographical location, intrinsic aesthetic values, their association with significant events or people, a connection with supernatural beings or simply their morphological landform as peaks (De Nardi 2003: 18; *ibid.*: 27).

I wondered and discussed with Italian colleagues what link there was, if any, between a site's settings and the nature of its use, especially in symbolic and ritual terms. I asked "what makes a place special?" I wanted to find out in the field what this fact implied in archaeological terms.

I subsequently discovered Whitehouse's, Bradley's and Tilley's work (Whitehouse 1992; 2001; Bradley 2000; Tilley 1994; 1996) and started applying some of their ideas and findings to my area of interest: the potential benefits of a humanist approach to the landscape of the Veneto started to emerge.

So that was my starting point. But would such an exercise be viable? I started assessing my study area seeking to determine the potential advantages and pitfalls of a landscape survey geared towards a humanistic interpretation.

2.2 A humanistic approach to landscapes in archaeology

First of all I would like to define my use of the term 'humanism'. I will adopt this term and the adjective 'humanistic' to designate an approach or quality that puts people at the centre of the lived environment, as a necessary presence in space, the paramount ingredient of 'places', not in the traditional meaning of people's supremacy over nature and of rationalisation of the person-environment relationship in which 'man' is the detached observer of the environment (Relph 1981: 15).

Landscape archaeology developed following a transition from the antiquarian approach of early scholarly practice, with its almost absolute bias toward monumental sites and artefacts as *objets d'art* extrapolated from their primary context (Thomas 1993: 19; Knapp and Ashmore 1999: 7 ff.) to an 'off-site archaeology', a trend moving beyond the edge of the site trench and bringing the surrounding topography into the archaeological picture. The new trend in the discipline challenged the 'centrality of digging' in favour of a different, more wide-ranging outlook on the past (Knapp and Ashmore 1999: 2; Hodder 1999: 15). This theoretical shift raised greater awareness of environmental issues, of topographical analysis and an interest in a 'regional' picture rather than the absolute vacuum of the site's microcosm.

Archaeological theory and practice, however, did not shift directly from antiquarian subjectivity to this holistic outlook: in the 1960s and 1970s New Archaeology and processual archaeology set new trends and shifted the focus of landscape analysis toward spatial models, statistical sampling, site catchment and nearest-neighbour analyses, palaeo-economic studies and so on (see works by palaeo-economists Higgs and Vita-Finzi 1970 and Jarman et al. 1982; Wagstaff 1987: 28 ff.; Thomas 1993). The 'romantic' rhetoric and flights of fancy typical of pre-Childean archaeology, the interpretations based upon personal impressions and the extravagant speculations on landscapes and monuments were dismissed as subjective and unwarranted assumptions and set aside in light of the new scientific, objective, functionalist and statistical treatment of space (Children and Nash 1997: 2). The issue of past landscapes was addressed in largely economic or functionalist terms as recipients for research on the origins of agriculture (Higgs and Vita-Finzi 1970, Jarman et al. 1970, 1975, 1982) or handled as a simple blank backdrop to social action, interaction, a vacuum in which the events and artefacts forming the archaeological record occurred (Children and Nash 1997).

The impetus of New Archaeology scholars such as Lewis Binford and Michael Schiffer (Binford 1977, Schiffer 1976 and 1987) and the thought of other processual scholars such as David Clarke (Clarke 1972), toward an analytical, empiricist archaeology and the building of models with which to make sense of the archaeological record and past activities (Clarke 1972) meant that attention was paid to the landscape as the recipient of human action, interaction and exploitation of resources. The need for more rigorous methodologies had generated concerns about reliable patterns, followed by the minimising of the subjective element in the interpretation of material culture (Wagstaff 1987: 28). Binford (Binford 1977: 145-146) claimed that one should look for the criteria according to which ancient individuals chose a specific location, manipulated it, exploited it and maintained it, assuming that said criteria were universal, and part of people's patterned behaviour.

The obvious problems with this approach stem from the fact that space and place had become separated from cultural, cognitive and emotional human involvement, as if they were separate entities or variables being exploited and trod upon by people without any consequences. The human element had become alienated from the world people lived in. Until quite recently, landscape archaeology lacked that subjective, experiential approach necessary to gain a better understanding of how past peoples actually *felt* about their surroundings, meant in the sense of not only monuments but also natural features, and what their local landscape meant to them. Awareness and hands-on experience of familiar, lived-in landscapes, clearly having very little to do with dots on a map, informed community and kin organisation, social rules and the holding, exertion and transmission of power and authority (Knapp 1999: 231; Thomas 1991: 179 ff.)

2.2.1 The mind/body and culture-nature dichotomies

One of the main problems posed by the current approaches to landscape research in archaeology lies in the deeply rooted dichotomy between 'nature' and 'culture', largely stemming from René Descartes and the Enlightenment. Cognitive-processual archaeology (Relph 1981, Renfrew et al. 1994) also drew upon another Enlightenment notion, that seeing the body as an animal, naturalistic element and the mind as a detached, pure, elevated entity, leading to the study of human beings, anthropology and archaeology as a dualistic endeavour: the "biological" aspect of the body vs. the "metaphysical" domain of the mind; and the wild realm of nature vs. the educated and tamed dimension of architecture and spatial manipulation (cf. Bradley 1991).

Philosophers and thinkers criticised the mind/body dichotomy as restrictive and misleading in the understanding of humans and their engagement with the environment,

and as a belittlement of the full extent of lived experience (Heidegger 1927 (1996), Merleau-Ponty 1945).

Traditionally speaking, archaeology is in itself a discipline concerned with quintessential *culture* as opposed to *nature*, the irrational element of the past, anything and everything that cannot be quantified, measured, and ascribed to human agency and agendas (Thomas 1996: 11; Tilley and Bennet 2001: 335-336). Much archaeological advancement in the understanding and interpretation of material culture stems from a more or less conscious dissection of the mental/cognitive from the biological/bodily elements perceived in the human form (Thomas 1996: 18 ff.). "The body is not a container that we live in, it is an aspect of the self that we live through" (ibid: 19).

A key concept of both structuralism and of processual archaeology is that the symbolic dichotomy male/female, inside/outside and culture/nature are identifiable as underlying themes in material culture (Shanks and Tilley 1987). Tilley himself explicitly uses structuralist dualisms in his phenomenological interpretations (Tilley 1994).

This distinction is not so strongly felt in the field of human and cultural geography (for the most recent critique see Wylie 2007: 9-11; also Tuan 1977; Craik 1986; Relph 1981, 1985 [2000] and Mugerauer 1985 [2000]): I will discuss this instance in section 2.4 below.

Meanwhile, despite awareness on the part of many archaeologists of the more holistic outlook afforded by anthropological and geographical studies to the landscape as a whole (Moore 1986, Relph 1976, 1981 and 2000), the tension between nature and culture is often understood to be expressed in the manipulation of space by people. Depositional practices in the landscape, such as the digging of pits containing remains of cooked foodstuffs and elements referring to the domestic hearths in Neolithic long barrow ditches have been interpreted as the "taming" of wild places, a mechanism of making room for "culture" in nature (Thomas 1991: 76). This concept is not without problems, as the monuments (long barrows) and the ground and land they were built on are assumed to be intrinsically different, if not opposed.

In one of the few studies on Italic cult places that explicitly dealt with their topographic settings (Edlund 1987), the culture/nature tension was nonetheless tangible. Below I will argue how my contribution to knowledge differs from Edlund's in terms of the starting point, or perspective on landscape that I take, and contrast it with her own.

As Richard Bradley states in his 'Archaeology of natural places', the full 'archaeological potential of natural places' is still unexplored (Bradley 2000: 33, 35, 36): locations in the landscape associated with cultural events (i.e. production sites, ritual sites

etc.) but not manipulated by humans, or at any rate not altered from the onset have a unique significance, a latent power in them that can be elusive to superficial analyses, but that can be potentially revealed by more focussed investigations.

That ritual and political knowledge were largely accountable for the significance of a locale and not the built monuments in themselves is a commonly held theory (Nash 1997: 19-20). There were obviously different, variable, case-specific ways for people to appropriate a place, make it their own, keep its significance alive; this process did not have to imply monument construction. When monuments did get constructed, the act of construction established a symbolic dialogue between the built artificial form and the surrounding natural topography which can be enigmatic to decipher and is often little understood (Tilley 1993b: 58).

As Bradley's, Tilley's, Thomas's, Bender's, Hamilton's, and Nash's inspirational research and fieldwork show, we can infer that prehistoric monuments were often aligned with, or juxtaposed to, striking natural features of the terrain, as if their constructors wished to replicate landforms, highlight them or convey their symbolic meanings at a variety of levels (Nash 1997: 20 and others). It would seem therefore as if the natural places where these monuments were sited were already important, already special (Thomas 1996: 89). Significantly, the very distinction between 'natural' and 'artificial' is a modern creation, insofar as ancient individual and communities might have had no way of knowing whether a henge monument was anything more than a tor or fantastically-shaped rock outcrop, and vice versa (Tilley and Bennet 2001: 344-345). In my thesis I will return often to this point and attempt to show that the forced separation of built and un-built locations is far from helpful and can in fact be misleading in the reconstruction and appreciation of 'sense of place'.

2.2.2 The concept of landscape or landscapes

The concept of landscape in human geography had different stages ranging from a concern with the quantifiable, detached visible form of the land that could be surveyed, to the brief yet influential scientific phase of the 1960s and 1970s in which landscape was an equation, and a set of spatial relationships that could be calculated to an embodied perspective that interprets human involvement with landforms and cultural values embedded in landscapes.

Many contrasting views of landscape overlap in human geography, and in the sub-discipline of cultural geography. The first theoretical standpoint of landscape as cultural entity, the view I follow in the present thesis, originated with the Berkeley School, fronted by scholars such as Carl Sauer (1956, 1963a) who reclaimed landscape and geography as studies of people and 'cultural' landscapes, not merely landforms (cf. Wylie 2007: 19 ff.);

this approach, albeit criticised for being too empirical and descriptive rather than interpretative (Wylie 2007: 28-29) was to be very lasting, and together with J. B. Jackson's 'vernacular' exploration of landscapes (Jackson 1984), led to the view of landscape as meaning-laden entity imbued with cultural significance, shaped and shaping the people inhabiting it. In the 1970s, the so called humanistic geographers (Tuan, Relph, Mugerauer) had applied phenomenology to their understanding of personal, intimate encounters with landscape, and to make sense of the complexity of places as lived-in, cultural forms, to be experienced in a myriad of different ways. Constant in cultural geographical studies is the assumption that landscape is always filtered by culture, by the person's background and social expectations.

The concept of landscape in archaeological theory also went through different phases: in the New Archaeology and processual days (1960- early 1980s) landscape was studied in two-dimensional terms, as a backdrop for human interaction and provisioning of food and water, raw material for technological production; the landscape was also broken down in site catchment analyses to assess the likely radius of movement and actions of certain communities or settlements in the surrounding topography (Higgs and Vita-Finzi 1970; Dennell 1987: 73 *ff.*). The ever increasing popularity of air photography (used since the 1920s) and the "quantitative revolution" (Roberts 1987: 86 *ff.*) culminated in the long-term love affair of archaeologists with distribution maps and functionalist approaches to the environment.

The modelling of landscape use in largely functionalist terms was one of the mainstays of processual archaeology, and adopted by scholars such as Ian Hodder and Clive Orton (Hodder and Orton 1976).

The post-processual phase of the 1980s brought about a rethinking of the very concept of landscape, this time as a changing, culture-specific entity that is both shaped by and shapes those who inhabit it (Wagstaff 1987). In later years, landscape attracted different specialists who, in turn, studied monuments in the landscape as markers of social organisation (Thomas 1991), analysed the use of landscape and the selection of special locations for hoarding, votive depositions and tool making (Bradley 1990).

Barbara Bender (Bender 1993 ed.) promoted a study of landscape that went beyond the functional aspects of land use towards a more holistic vision of the lived experience of places.

Tilley broke down selected landscape elements in an attempt to identify the instances in which culture imitates nature, when ancient communities structured their sacred

landscapes to emulate or mimic significant natural features of the landscape (Tilley 1994, see below).

Recently, the concept of 'sacred landscape' has been criticised as too restrictive (van Dommelen 1999: 281): by definition it creates a bias in the way we investigate ancient spaces and it precludes an all-encompassing vision of landscapes as places lived in on a daily basis and at complex perceptual levels by their inhabitants. Also, the notion of a 'sacred' landscape does not imply a strictly controlled space apart from every day activities perceived as secular (Bender, Hamilton and Tilley 1997: 174). Where one draws the line between 'sacred' and 'secular' in prehistoric landscapes is a purely academic exercise, as we learn from anthropological insights into non-Western, pre-capitalist peoples and the way they relate to their land (cf. Küchler 1993). Many scholars still play by this rule, namely Edlund (1988), when she stated: "depending on the context, the boundary separates that which is sacred (*inside*), from that which is outside, or secular". (Edlund 1988: 37, my emphasis).

The issues of visibility and intervisibility pose other fundamental questions to scholars and fieldworkers, as it is likely that the extent to which a locale could be seen or its hiddenness and seclusion are significant to an understanding of ritual landscapes, particularly prehistoric ones (Bowden 1999: 89). I shall treat the above issues at a greater length in section 2.3 below.

Anglo-Saxon scholars' attitude to prehistoric votive deposits has also dramatically changed, with increasing attention shifting from the composition and manufacture technology of the votive objects to their topographical settings and the in-depth investigations of the rationale behind acts of deposition (Bradley 1990: 109 ff., Hill 1995; Children and Nash 1997: 2-3, Bradley 2000: 37, 38). Where there used to be a bias towards the treatment of votive deposits as collections of portable artefacts that could be easily transported to a museum and handily studied and catalogued unproblematically away from their find spot, there is now a growing awareness that the place where they were deposited may be as significant to their understanding as the dedicated materials themselves. The study of 'place' could shed light on the modes, purposes and even agents of the act of deposition, on important aspects of past belief systems and cosmologies. The selection of a specific locale for special activities such as interment of ritual objects, burials and gifts to the deities is likely to have much to do with rationales and beliefs informing social identity and group politics (Bradley 1990: 61, 91, 181, 192).

In the present thesis I will adopt Edward Relph's interpretation of the term 'landscape' to indicate "everything one sees and senses when out of doors", including

elements such as "clouds, (...) the rain, (...) sounds, smells, association and (...) the human element." (Relph 1981: 22). Landscape is meant here as the complex whole of elements, tangible and intangible, that are experienced by people.

An archaeological case study

To exemplify the nature of the shift in perception of places and monuments in archaeology I shall briefly illustrate the topic of English Iron Age hill-forts. These sites, object of almost continuous study for more than a century (Pitt-Rivers 1888; Hawkes 1931; Clark 1940; Hawkes 1954; Collis 1976, 1981 and 1996; Harding 1976; Forde-Johnston 1976; Cunliffe 1991, 1984; Bowden and McOmish 1987; Hill 1995; Hamilton and Manley 2001), have been interpreted in several different ways through time.

In primis, they had been interpreted as defensive sites against enemy incursions (Pitt-Rivers 1888; Hawkes 1931 et al.: a useful summary is in Hamilton and Manley 2001: 8) on the strength of surviving earthworks such as banks and ditches, even though there was no hard evidence pointing toward any known incursions or hostilities for the period many of the sites were in use (Bowden and McOmish 1987: 76 ff.). Also, there was no evidence that many of them had been inhabited on anything resembling a regular basis, even though evidence did exist for their use as social elite foci and landmarks (Bowden and McOmish 1987: 80). Moreover, the positioning of many of them was scarcely effective in defensive terms: some of them were on low ground, some others on hill slopes overlooked by the hill top above, clearly disadvantaged from a strategic perspective; others had incomplete defensive earthworks, or had them where they would not have successfully impeded enemy access.

Even relatively early studies (Forde-Johnston 1976: 282) asked whether there were other, equally important criteria for the establishment of hill-forts in such peculiar positions or with such slight defences: these irregularities however tended to be explained in functionalist terms, such as the want and availability of pasture land, or an 'emergency' use of the sites as opposed to continuous defensive needs and so on. Therefore, it seems as if some of them were not defensive hill-forts at all, and even the ramparts or earthworks could have served a partly or largely symbolic function (Cunliffe 1984; Bowden and McOmish 1987: 80; 1989: 13-14; Hamilton and Manley 2001: 31-32).

More recent studies also abandoned the concept that 'hill-forts' were the seats of power of aristocratic elites in feudal-style 'Celtic' societies or that they were established to fend off foreign invaders (Harding 1976: 52; Forde-Johnston 1976, Hill 1996) and the belief in their exclusive significance as elitist powerhouses. The new perspective re-visited these

sites as community entities, and as the outcome of communal effort in building, maintenance and use (Hill 1996).

Modern scholarly trends tackle hill-forts as complex cultural and symbolic entities, display goods, ceremonial centres, social foci and territorial markers. Their very location high up on a headland might have had much to do with their being considered special places (cfr. Bowden 1999: 40).

Some so called hill-forts incorporated earlier monuments (i.e. Bronze Age barrows or earlier still long mounds within their earthworks), and some were Bronze Age in date. Some scholars dealt with this in a superficial manner. Forde-Johnston mentions this, but dismisses the occurrence of pre- Iron Age features in or at hillfort locations, i.e. Bronze Age barrows as a coincidental positioning requirement for both monument types (so as to be visible in the skyline), or he treats the barrows as "additional inducements": "it may have been felt that the sacred associations of a burial place would afford protection over and above that provided by the ramparts." (Forde-Johnston 1976: 103). It is my belief that the so called forts would have been built on already meaningful locations, and that the presence of barrows was all but a coincidence dictated by topographical criteria of positioning.

Secondly, at many a site pits were excavated yielding signs of ritual activities, as well as stored foodstuffs: these had been interpreted as utilitarian storage pits, (Hill 1995 et al.) but contained material charged with symbolic value and ritual significance, such as human bones (Hill 1995: 11, 19, 42; Hamilton and Manley 2001: 21). Pits at other so called hillforts, such as Mount Caburn, contained ritually defunctionalised metalwork (Hamilton and Manley 2001: 27-28).

The issue of their function and significance is definitely open to more than one interpretation. In summation, this case study represents an excellent instance of the shifting interpretation of one type-site throughout decades of evolving academic thought.

2.2.3 Philosophical applications to landscape studies

Hermeneutic (interpretive) and phenomenological perspectives derived from philosophy and human geography offer valuable contributions to the understanding of past perception and significance of landscape, be it in its built or unaltered forms.

Hermeneutics could be defined as the branch of philosophy concerned with interpretation. It is the philosophical endeavour to interpret symbolism entrenched in cultural forms as narrative elements, in material objects as text: broadly speaking, it is an analysis of 'the text as the medium which links human subjects to their world' (Kirk 1992: 187). In archaeology, hermeneutics can be translated into 'interpretation' of symbols encoded in material culture and the deciphering of the archaeological record as text (Ricoeur

1981; Patrik 1985: 28, 32 ff.; Thomas 1991: 32). Julian Thomas maintains that landscape as a whole can be considered as text, a text whose writing is never finished and continually altered, read and interpreted (see also Barrett 1991: 4 ff.). Hence monuments, as part of a wider landscape can be seen as mutually referenced, "intertextual", linked to one another (Thomas 1991: 32). The text analogy is only really effective if the text in question is multivocal in character, dialogic in nature and overlapping contrasting alternative texts, a chaotic non-linear array of words rather than a linear and predictable prose however, because that is what landscape is like (cf. Altenberg 2003).

Another philosophical stimulus that inspired a now well-established way of doing archaeology is phenomenology. The use of concepts pertaining to phenomenology was inspired by the work of philosopher Martin Heidegger and its application on person and world, *Being-in-Time* and *Being-in-the-World* (Relph 2000: 17 ff.).

Phenomenology could be roughly defined as the means by which things reveal themselves, or unravel themselves to people. It is the way they disclose themselves to human beings, in a world that is already meaningful and in which people are already 'thrown in' (Heidegger in Moran 2000, 194, 227, 242). Phenomenology asserts that there can be no separation between the feeling subject and the 'felt' or experienced objects,, as that would presuppose a duality between subject and object, when in reality the subject of sensation is also the object of sensation: in other words, when I experience an object (i.e. a chair), the chair experiences me as well. This indelible reciprocity of experience sets phenomenological studies apart from other ways of experiencing place, i.e. as spectacle or text to be read (in hermeneutics): in human geography, principles of embodiment and the negation of the subject/object dichotomy are expressed in non-representational approaches to landscape studies (Wylie 2007: 162. For a discussion of phenomenological approaches to place see Wylie 2007, chapter five, "Landscape phenomenology").

The use of insights and concepts stemming from phenomenology has shaped recent works in both archaeology and human geography.

Phenomenology has been successfully applied to the study of place, landscape (Tilley 1994, 1996, 2004; Tilley & Bennett 2001; Ingold 1993, 2000; Hamilton and Whitehouse 2006, Hamilton et al. 2006, Bender 2006), time (Thomas 1996) and material culture (Thomas 2006), and in archaeology more than in geography, adopted as a methodological 'package' used to interpret a set of data or evidence (Thomas 2006: 48): in particular, it has been applied to further understand the relationship between people and the world around them, and the extent to which experience of the material world and the perception of nature (Ingold 2000) shapes social and cultural processes.

Tilley focuses his investigation on the social nature of the landscape and how nature is mimicked in the construction of monumental structures (Tilley 1994, 1996 and 2004; Tilley and Bennett 2001), although his accounts tend to disregard issues of gender (Bruck 2005); Bender uses insights from phenomenology and post-colonialism to investigate the conflicting, highly society-specific and gendered nature of the negotiation of nature and place (Bender 1993, 2006), while Thomas applies principles of Heideggerian phenomenology to the understanding of social practices and place-making (Thomas 1996), although, like Bender, he firmly holds that perception is culturally formed and necessarily shaped by the social and political background of the individual person (Thomas 1996, 2006: 47).

Ingold applies principles of Heideggerian thought to his investigation of how people live in the world, and how they negotiate places from a 'dwelling' and embodied perspective (Ingold 1993, 2000), and he is particularly interested at the interplay between people and nature (Ingold 2000).

By contrast with the grandiose monumental and ritual landscapes of northern Europe - that Tilley studies, Hamilton and Whitehouse (Hamilton and Whitehouse 2006; Hamilton et al. 2006) apply phenomenology in an experimental, hands-on manner in their reinterpretation of everyday living experience in a southern Italian Neolithic landscape: their experimental methodology makes use of all the senses and contextualises the experience of 'dwelling', taskscapes (Ingold 1993) and spatial practices.

Tilley and Thomas make explicit reference to phenomenology in reconstructing the ways in which people moved about in the landscape, and going beyond the textual metaphor in experiencing place and the world: 'thinking through the body' as Johnson puts it (Johnson 1999: 114).

In human and cultural geography, the shift from representation to non-representation in the experience of the world has been pioneered by Nigel Thrift, John Wylie and Mitch Rose, who refer to principles drawn from Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and performance theorists such as Judith Butler to shape new readings of places that explore emotional and affective (cf. Thrift 2004) responses to the landscape from within rather than gazing from without, and seek to explain places as mobile and open-ended, ephemeral and messy, constructed and negotiated through practice rather than through contemplation (Thrift 1997, 2004; Wylie 2002, 2005; Rose 2002, 2006). Human and historical geographers Harvey, Cloke and Atkinson also look at how perception and the role of memory shape our everyday understanding of the world (Atkinson 2007) and created mythological and social worlds in the past.

The phenomenological insights found in the works mentioned above mainly draw from Heidegger's (Thomas 1996, Rose 2002) and Merleau-Ponty's (Tilley 1994) work, although in archaeology this inspiration is more straight-forward and not filtered by contemporary preoccupations with gendered and political landscapes: the exception is Bender's work, and its commitment to inclusive geographies and anthropologies of feelings, belonging and resistance.

However, not all is rosy in the phenomenological sphere. I will present here a brief review of, respectively, methodological and theoretical problems with the application of phenomenology to research.

There has recently been a criticism of phenomenological applications within the discipline of archaeology by Andrew Fleming (1999 and 2005): he criticises Chris Tilley's insights and methodology (and Vicki Cumming's, whose approach he perceives as a development of Tilley's, see Cummings and Whittle 2004) as arbitrary, overambitious and not rigorous (Fleming 2005: 922), and in some cases, he asserts that the work of both scholars is hardly a significant contribution to Neolithic studies and that both are, in fact, somewhat inaccurate in both their fieldwork methodology and results and in the presentation of their 'contentious' arguments (ibid.: 924).

On a different note, Julian Thomas (2006: 43), an 'insider' writing within the phenomenological tradition, accuses many so called followers of Tilley of taking advantage of the 'shield' of phenomenology to bring forward studies based entirely on unbridled, subjective experience. This kind of criticism seems to be less marked in human geography, perhaps because of its ever evolving, more open-ended scope and its ever wider focus on alternative perspectives and the rejection of traditionally academic and scholarly viewpoints. In David Atkinson's words, 'the emergence of plural voices that complicate, expand upon, dispute or undermine traditional, 'official' narratives [of history] is a welcome trend-particularly as it allows communities to reflect upon their individual and collective pasts' (Atkinson 2008: 383).

On a theoretical level, the phenomenological exercise has been defined as 'appropriating', academic and elitist (Chadwick 2004), pointless and arbitrary (Fleming 1999, 2005) and 'archetypal' (Bender 2006). Despite criticism within archaeology (Fleming 1999, 2005) and from the feminist, post-colonial strand of human geography (Rose 1993, Valentine 1999 and 2002, Wylie 2007: 181 ff.), phenomenology represents a field rich in inspirations for the scholar of places past and present, a metaphor for cosmologies of the world, a useful analogy or allegory (Thomas 2006: 55).

I will explore further the implications of a phenomenological approach in archaeological fieldwork and theory in section 2.4 (Phenomenological applications in archaeology) and contextualise it in the literature in section 2.6.2 (Archaeology of landscape). In the next section I explore the influence of theories and approaches in human geography on my own research.

2.3 Human geography: the cultural meaning of places and the politics of mapping and photography

Although it is living a kind of 'revival' in recent cultural geography (Thrift 1997, 1999 and 2004, Wylie 2005, 2007, Rose 2002 and 2006), phenomenology is often referred to as providing a philosophical background to humanistic approaches in geography (Relph 1970, 1981; Ley and Samuels 1978) 'as a kind of romantic revival.' (Hodder 1987: 140). The fruitful application of phenomenology to humanistic geography occurred at least two decades before its advent into the archaeological agenda (1960s- 1970s), largely through the research of pioneering scholars like Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph (Tuan 1974 and 1977; Relph 1976, 1981 and 1985 [2000]), and incorporated in non-representational theory in human geography (see Wylie 2007).

The initial attitude of humanistic geography, concerned with the role of embodied individuals in the environment, stood against the principles of scientific geography the same way humanism stood against scientism (Relph 1981: 17, 126, 135 *ff.*), and found a perfect partner in phenomenology in its rejection of Cartesian dualism between subject-object and nature-culture (*ibid.*: 28-29).

'Later there developed a more moderate stance in which geographers practising 'humanistic' geography saw it as not the antidote to science, but as part and parcel of the social sciences and thus part of science, albeit borrowing its 'manifesto' and methods mainly from the humanities (Tuan 1976, Nicholas Entrikin in Relph 1981: 132; David Ley and Marwyn Samuels 1979 *ibid.* 133).

The insights afforded by phenomenology and perception of the environment as 'dwelling' and 'belonging' to places soon started being incorporated into architectural theory (Bognar 1985) as well. Spatial and environmental theorists became concerned with the human response to landscape and with the appreciation of the 'genius loci', spirit of place, in the creation of sustainable dwelling environments (Bognar 1985: 188-189).

As mentioned above, the culture-nature distinction is not so strongly felt in the field of humanistic geography (cf. Bognar 1985, Tuan 1977, Craik 1986, Relph 1985 [2000] and Mugerauer 1985 [2000]), in that scholars of present and recent landscapes and townscapes encompass all elements that are likely to be perceived and interpreted by people in their

construction of a sense or spirit of place, regardless of their nature and origin, such as natural landforms, weather and seasonality (see in particular the accounts of the 19th century traveller Cozzens travelling through a fearful Grand Canyon and of the pioneers' impressions of the sedimentary bluffs along the Oregon Trail in Mugerauer 1985: 52-56).

I feel that my own views and perception of the whole concept of landscape, dwelling and situatedness owe much more to the pioneering thought of geographers such as Yu Fu Tuan, Robert Mugerauer and Edward Relph and cultural geographers Crang, Wylie and Thrift and, to a lesser extent, to environmental psychologists such as Kenneth Craik (Craik 1975 and 1986) than to 'practitioners' of landscape archaeology, for the reason I argued above, that emphasis on monuments and architecture is not as central in the social sciences; this thesis also draws on more recent theories in cultural geography (i.e. Crang 1998, Wylie 2002 and 2007, Pinder 2005). Therefore, I will base many of my observations on works of a geographical rather than archaeological matrix throughout the present thesis.

The concept of landscape discussed at length in human and cultural geography (for the most recent and comprehensive critique see Wylie 2007), and understood here as complex and contradictory, consisting of a multiplicity of meanings that situate a culture in its setting and explore the experience of place of the individuals dwelling or engaging with it, underpins the theoretical framework of this thesis: I will start from the understanding that place is inseparable from material culture and as such it becomes material culture as soon as people interact with it: in this case, the Venetic peoples.

One particularly influencing concept I encountered in human geography and humanistic architectural theory was that of *genius loci*, after Alexander Pope (Pope 1731 quoted in Relph 1981: 33 ff.). *Genius loci*, or 'spirit of place', does not limit itself to the architectural or built environment in the appreciation and experience of landscapes (or gardens, as the term originally referred to): by *genius loci* architects Christian Norberg-Schulz (1980) and Botond Bogнар (1985) designated the often indefinable mixture of emotions, sensations and variables, the 'atmosphere' permeating a particular locality, one including "spatial structures, topographical patterns, textures, natural and climatic conditions such as light, wind and sound, in addition to people and the pattern of human events" (Bognar 1985: 188).

Humanistic geographers investigated the processes by which people are drawn and become attached to places, what makes them feel at home and what conveys such strong feelings as 'belonging' and 'otherness'. Edward Relph described the complexity of human perception of places: "places are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations. Place experiences are necessarily time-

deepened and memory-qualified" (Relph 1985: 26). This view in particular informed much of my interpretation of long-term place significance and perfectly describe the quality and extent of the complex and overlapping Venetic sense of place.

2.3.1 The politics of maps and photographs: the social life of images

This section briefly drafts current and contemporary critiques of maps and photographs as socially produced artefacts and tools of representation of the world. It discusses the perception of maps and the social context of the activities of map-making and photograph-taking, in so doing assessing their suitability for a phenomenological study of places; it also situates this thesis in the wider fields of human geography and visual culture by discussing the usefulness and purpose of visual representations of landscape in this study in the context of my research questions.

I will start by drafting a framework for the critical study of maps: scholars such as Brian Harley, Denis Wood and David Pinder have criticised cartographic positivism and the misled conception of the 'neutrality' of maps (Wood 1992: 17 *ff.*; Harley and Laxton 2001: 5 *ff.*).

They explored the significance and purpose of cartography from a variety of perspectives: as symbols and tool to promote knowledge of the world and to answer political agendas (Harley and Laxton 2001, Wood 1992), to deconstruct essentialist knowledge and Euclidean traditions of cartography (Pinder 2005), and ultimately to reveal the map for what it is: never value-free, always biased, and a social construction (Harley and Laxton 2001: 35), a representation of the world rather than faithful mirror of reality.

Mapping generates knowledge and as such is a powerful tool to interpret the world. In making my own maps, I expressed my own interpretation of the world as encountered by myself and colleagues during fieldwork- my maps could therefore influence subsequent visits and visitors to these places, who would relate their own vision and experience of the places with my own. Unlike distribution maps found in many works of an archaeological nature (from Pascucci 1990 to Malnati and Gamba 2003), my maps do not claim to be the final word in mapping, nor do they attempt to represent the sites 'objectively': they are filtered by perception and by the context in which I produced them (cf. Pinder 2005).

Similar concerns with the authorship of the visual image and the politics of representation have been happening in the visual arts since the 1970s. In her poignant critique of photography, scholar Susan Sontag (2003) has deconstructed the practice and purpose of photography from its origins as an elitist practice, to the birth and development of documentary photography, down to the creation of a new way of seeing, as if through as

camera lens, and the increasing **commodification** of photographs as a must-do for holiday makers and collectables. She maintains that, far from being a mirror of reality, photographs are artefacts, always embedded in the context and circumstances of the photographer, and ultimately a social product.

Sontag's research also explored the politics of photography, as does the work of John Berger (1980) and David Levi Strauss (2003), who question the ethics of photography and the relationship between western colonialism and an objectification of the 'other' by the use of cameras. Related issues are the use of photography as a tool for political propaganda (Berger 1980: 41 ff.; Levi Strauss 2003: 12 ff.).

Maps and photographs lend themselves well to the phenomenological exercise: they can convey a thicker and more rounded sense of place, where colours, exposure, elements that are included and excluded reflect the bodily situation and subjectivity of the individual making as map or photographing a place. In chapter 3 I will expand on the rationale for my use of maps and photographs to illustrate the present thesis.

Let us take a step back and assess the usefulness of phenomenology in the discipline of archaeology. For a review of uses of phenomenology in human geography and across the social sciences- including archaeology- refer to Wylie 2007 (chapter 5).

2.4 Phenomenological applications in archaeology

After the disillusionment with an archaeology of 'dots on a map' and the perceived failure of statistical methods to interpret archaeological record and past landscapes, a new attitude attempting to probe within the human mind came about, although affected by the concern about accuracy and the feasibility of such an exercise ('the contents of human minds are clearly lost to us', Thomas 1993: 29).

The popularity of phenomenology within the post-structuralist framework is due to its rejection of the body-mind dualism, a leftover concept from Descartes and the Enlightenment, and a renewed awareness of the concept of embodiment and dwelling (Wylie 2007: 144 ff.).

The origins of the approach to human perception in archaeology will be concisely drafted as follows.

Hawkes's 'Ladder of inference' (Hawkes 1954) relegated symbolism, cognition and religion to the uppermost rungs, as issues practically impossible, if not useless, to explore. This attitude was responsible for much scepticism in earlier archaeological theory on ritual and belief systems (Whitehouse 1996). The fact that meanings attached by ancient individuals to spaces and places could be retrieved was perceived as hazardous, risky,

utterly speculative, if not ludicrous. However phenomenology, semiotics and their application to the archaeology and geography of the person and the senses challenge this assumption and scholars embracing this newer approach do not fail to claim that these aspects of the past and present, of human beings, can and should be tackled with the same scientific accuracy and rigour applied to more practical spheres of inference such as palaeoeconomy and ancient technological practices, although admittedly this does not always occur (Whitehouse 1996).

Phenomenology is essentially the understanding of the world as perceived from an embodied perspective, that is through our senses. It dictates that people engage with the world through their bodies and emotions as well as rationally through their cognitive abilities. Reality as we know it is a world we are already thrown into, not a world we create rationally, and certainly not the projection of humans' superior mind, a' la Descartes (Wylie 2007: 145-147).

Applied to landscapes, the concept describes the experience of place and space through the medium of the human body; it dictates that mind is never separated from body and nature (Hodder 1999: 132). Applied to the study of ancient cultures, it impacts on the way past individuals experienced landscapes and places through their bodily movements and the performance of tasks and practices at set locales (Hodder 1999: 14, 15, 132).

Some of the scholars who applied concepts taken from phenomenology to their own theoretical framework and field methodology are Chris Tilley, Tim Ingold, Julian Thomas, Sue Hamilton, Ruth Whitehouse and Eleanor Betts. I will discuss Tilley's and Thomas's contributions in 2.3.2 below; let us briefly deal with Ingold and Hamilton and Whitehouse's work here.

Anthropologist Tim Ingold (Ingold 1993) wrote a deeply influential paper in which he advocated the shift away from the naturalistic concept of landscapes as mere backdrops to human activities. He argued that people experience their surroundings from a 'dwelling perspective': "landscape is constituted as an enduring record of - and testimony to- the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it" (Ingold 1993: 152). Besides highlighting the temporality of places, as opposed to a static appraisal of space, he pointed out that people experience the distance between points (locales) as a journey, as a bodily movement (ibid. 153).

Eleanor Betts (Betts 2003 and forthcoming) applied the phenomenology of the senses to her approach to the experiencing of different kinds of places (i.e. restricted vs. open and spacious) specifically geared towards 'making sense of' ritual sites in the Iron Age Marche. She conducted a series of experiential descents into caves in the region and documented her

sensations sequentially after Whitehouse 2001 (Betts 2003, fig. 9: 114), and ultimately asked whether the shift in experiencing caves would have so substantially changed since the Iron Age that we are making risky assumptions in trying to 'relive' the experience. She nonetheless argued for the centrality of the body in perceiving and engaging with our surroundings.

The application of a phenomenology of the five senses in the Tavoliere-Gargano project conducted by Whitehouse and Hamilton (Whitehouse and Hamilton 2006) more explicitly challenges the centrality of sight in the experiential assessment of lived space; they explore the full spectrum of the phenomenological/sensual exercise by experimenting with the everyday sounds of a dwelling area; they explore the landscapes and taskscapes of the quotidian and social, as opposed to much literature focussing on exceptional, 'special' ritual landscapes (cf. Harding 1991).

2. 5 Historic landscape archaeology

During my research I have come across the work of a few scholars of historic and modern landscapes that have had a strong impact on my views of landscape and shaped my *modus operandi* of fieldwork and interpretation.

Although I had been visiting, researching, interpreting and experiencing the Late prehistoric, Roman, post-Roman and medieval landscapes of northern Veneto since the start of my Masters degree, I had not come across a specific methodology or research agenda with which to compare my own findings, nor had I found in the archaeological literature on 'prehistoric' landscapes any hint that a long-term appraisal of places would be an issue worth investigating. I remember feeling slightly frustrated when confronted with much literature that seemed to want to study prehistoric landscapes in a vacuum (cf. Trant 1997), as if nothing had taken place in them afterwards... as if Roman and medieval individuals had become disembodied from their surroundings, as if their 'cultures' had stopped engaging with places as material culture.

More worryingly, I asked myself if my interest in later landscape dynamics and studies (place names, historic references) was 'irrelevant' to my field. Only recently have I reassured myself that it is not so, but it is not too late to do justice to my earlier 'hunches' and report the widening of the scope of my knowledge of landscape, which I do briefly below.

The work of Richard Morris (Morris 1989), Karin Altenberg (Altenberg 2003) and Paul Basu (Basu 1997), applied to British and European landscapes, provides interesting and thought-provoking comparanda with my own fieldwork.

Morris criticised previous research on church buildings in Medieval England, traditionally relegated to the realm of architectural history, and stressed the need to see churches and their surrounding landscapes as lived and perceived places, meaningful locales in people's imagination, social and personal awareness and day-to-day life. He contextualised churches in their historic and topographical settings and investigated the origins of their significance by revealing, among the other things, the origins of many parish churches in Romano-British settlements and shrines, by making explicit the link between churches and ancestral monuments and standing stones of the prehistoric period, and bringing to the fore the pagan origins of many so called *martyria* (the tombs of martyrs upon which medieval Church authorities built chapels), stressing how Roman authorities sought to entice the heathen English to worship the True Faith by taking advantage of locations that were already meaningful to them (pagan sanctuaries, sacred trees or locales associated with legendary figures- translated into 'martyrs'). Morris had the merit of bringing to the fore the enduring, complex and multi-layered texture of landscape memory and 'sense of place', landscape as enduring heritage, place as text that is certainly not erased with the advent of literacy and written documents.

Karin Altenberg presented a study of landscape perception and explored the link between place perception, dwelling and identity in the medieval period in three 'marginal' areas, two in Southwest England and one in Scania, Sweden, and approached the areas from the inside and from the outside.

Paul Basu's research (Basu 1997) explored the modern echoes of events shaping the landscape and people's livelihood in the Scottish Highlands between the years 1750-1850 (the Clearances): he set out to investigate the impact of this dramatic event on local identities by using historical and literary sources, conducting interviews and fieldwork consisting of photography and phenomenological considerations (Basu 1997). I discuss Altenberg's and Basu's work more in depth in chapter 6.

The implications of these well-conceptualised studies for my own research are many: long-term place significance, shifting meanings in the landscape, place memories, syncretisation of cults, and the shift in the use, reuse (cf. Morris 1989:50 and 59) and perception of material culture pertaining to cult.

Let us now take a closer look at the evolution and development of humanistic approaches to archaeological landscape studies.

2.6 Literature review

Here are a few of the most influential works to date in the archaeology of cult and landscape. The publications included in this section also draft the development of 'themes'

such as cult and landscape through time and across disciplinary trends and traditions of practice (i.e. cognitive-processual to post-processual and interpretative).

2.6.1 Archaeology of cult and ritual

Renfrew wrote his 'Archaeology of Cult: the Sanctuary of Phylakopi' in 1985, in which he approached the traditionally 'delicate' issue of cult and religion in pre-literate societies. Writing in the processual tradition, his approach to the 'unravelling' of meaning in cult practices was cognitively-driven (i.e. he was after a mental and psychological understanding of the cult processes and the archaeological traces they left behind) rather than perceptual. Undoubtedly he made a lasting contribution to the genre, but the relevance of his theories appears limited to complex societies and ritual systems such as that of the Aegean Bronze Age.

Richard Bradley in 1991 offered an interpretation of what he perceived as the state of research on prehistoric ritual, and presented it as a 'divide' between societies studied through their monuments and those societies that lacked this feature (Bradley 1991: 134). He maintained that although natural places where monuments were built were already significant, their construction deeply affected the way people experienced the world and constrained movement of people in and around places (ibid.: 136). I will return to the point of the 'domestication' of space by monument construction in chapters 5 and 6.

In the same volume, Robin Skeates presented a case study from Neolithic Abruzzo in which he identified and explored the issues of liminality, secrecy and symbolism of caves, and observed how their ritual use lasted thousands of years, often overlapping other forms of ritual such as votive dedications (Skeates 1991: 129).

Ruth Whitehouse dealt also with the topic of prehistoric cults in caves in 'Underground religion' (Whitehouse 1992). She looked at the issue of cult significance in the caves from a variety of perspectives, including a psychological and cognitive standpoint; she analysed a series of Neolithic caves in Central and Southern Italy and Sicily which had been interpreted as settings for initiation rites, and argued what she described as the likely sensory and psychological ordeal undergone by

Young boys, taken from the comfort of their mothers and their familiar domestic lives and incarcerated in hidden, dark, damp caves, to be instructed (...) in the dangerous and fearful secret knowledge(...).

(Whitehouse 1992: 179).

She systematically broke down the factors and characteristics that made people select these places for special activities not interpretable in utilitarian or secular terms.

The main merit of this approach to sacred contexts is the detailed attention with which she examined the individual natural elements of caves and rock shelters, with particular regard to water in its many forms (i.e. liquid, gaseous and solid), and asked to what extent said natural elements were the object or means of ritual praxis throughout the period of time in which the caves were used by humans.

A.C. Renfrew wrote 'The archaeology of mind' in 1994 as part of a collection of essays entitled 'The Ancient Mind'; again, like the 1985 paper on the Phylakopi cult place, in the tradition of cognitive-processual archaeology. He stressed the perceived difficulty of identifying cult and religious practices in often ambiguous contexts pertaining to early societies, and debated our likelihood to understand the meanings embedded in ritual, which he resolves by admitting that we will never grasp the one universal truth or significance of ancient cult. However, he then argued that iconographic depictions can lend useful insights into the significance of cult (Renfrew 1994: 49). He maintained that when similar symbols occur, it is possible to 'reconstruct' belief systems whenever such symbols occur (ibid. 54). This approach is clearly concerned with the mental/psychological appreciation of aspects of beliefs rather than with an embodied, context-specific and situated understanding of ritual.

Whitehouse offered another hands-on account of the descent into two caves in 2001 (Whitehouse 2001, *A Tale of Two Caves*), in which she attempted to recreate the emotional, irrational and subconscious condition and experience of an individual entering the sacred crevices for the first time as it may have been filtered and amplified through the five senses. Her ingenious exercise was aided by the almost unaltered physical conditions of one of the two caves she visited and the constant knowledge that no two individuals can experience the same place in the same way, allowing for individual biographies and experience, but this was nonetheless a remarkable contribution to the understanding of past perception of place and ritual.

These studies reflect different aspects and approaches to the study of ancient rituals, and reflect the authors' interests and formation as scholars; the Anglo-Saxon school of research into cult and ritual greatly differs from the way things are done on the Continent, especially in the Italian context (see below and in previous chapter for a discussion of the problems associated with typological and quantitative approaches to cult).

A recent volume promoting ritual study of many cultures across the globe is Barrowclough and Malone 2007 (eds.): this volume contains the proceedings of a conference called 'Cult in Context' held in Cambridge in 2006, and boasting papers treating many different aspects of cult and ritual in theoretically-informed ways, from the cognitive to the 'sensory' via the phenomenological. Among the many excellent contributions we find studies

of monuments (Renfrew 2007 and Cooney 2007) and votive objects (Ceccarelli 2007 and Hardie 2007). The overarching purpose of the volume is that of contextualising and understanding cult through material culture and to 'assess theory and methods' (Malone et al. 2007: 1). The variety of papers do this in different ways, some re-assessing old data and previous theories (Renfrew 2007, Whitehouse 2007), some presenting new information about sites and rituals (Alfayé 2007, Peatfield 2007). Rather than looking for shared characteristics of cult across periods and cultural boundaries, the papers seek to extrapolate the sense of place of ritual locations and/or the specific context of the ritual object in its specific context.

The paper reporting research closest to the subject matter of my thesis is that by Silvia Alfayé (2007), dealing with cult places in *Hispania Celtica* and discussing the problems associated with natural places, votive objects without a secure provenance and outdated excavations with no sound contextualisation of the finds: this paper generates many useful ideas about the relationship of sacred sites, nature, settlements and the rituals performed at meaningful places: it also raises the issue of individual vs. communal rituals (cf. Ralph 2007 in the same volume) and, most importantly, discusses the Romanisation of indigenous gods (Alfayé 2007: 317-318).

Overall this volume makes an outstanding contribution to critical, contextual study of ritual in prehistory, while the strong focus on the Mediterranean, and especially on Malta (14 out of 43 papers are on Malta and Maltese archaeology), forwards study of cult and ritual in the specialist 'niche' of Mediterranean archaeology.

2.6.2 Archaeology of landscape

The first instance of a cognitively-driven appraisal of landscapes is found in Lewis Binford's 1982 article 'The Archaeology of Place' (Binford 1982: 5-31). Writing from a strictly processual perspective, the endeavour to extrapolate meaning from the landscape was purely in mental terms, and quite separated from the bodily engagement of past peoples with the landscapes. He followed the well known idealist dichotomy of all-knowing mind (logos) and lowly body.

In 'Rethinking the Neolithic' (1991) Julian Thomas presented a different reading of megalithic monuments and landscape as a whole, as different as a post-processual outlook on the lived environment of people can be. In his account he provided a view of space and place that took into account human agency and social meanings of landforms, landmarks and places. He assessed the land as a cultural unit without breaking it down into separate symbolic-pragmatic arenas.

A major breakthrough in phenomenological landscape studies applied to archaeology came in 1994 when Christopher Tilley published 'A phenomenology of landscape': his seminal work had the merit, among the other things, of applying the insights and findings provided by field techniques and exercises such as visibility and intervisibility analysis to a humanistic and sensory interpretation and understanding of the Neolithic landscape surrounding the Dorset Cursus.

The central argument of Tilley's work related to a change in perspective with regards to Neolithic monuments and built sacred landscapes, geared toward a more holistic approach encompassing those locales that were not visibly altered but still retained a great symbolic power: Tilley asked whether it was the intrinsic symbolic power of the land to lead people to construct prominent structures emulating physical landforms. The author also argued that part of the drive behind the construction of the Cursus and other such monuments was the wish to enhance, frame or acknowledge the visible natural symbols entrenched in the terrain in a more permanent way. What his study did was to open up a whole new horizon in landscape research, and indicate ways in which digital technologies could employ traditional spatial analysis in more subjective, humanistic terms (Lake and Woodman 2003: 689 *ff.*).

Following the Dorset experiment, he collaborated with Barbara Bender and Sue Hamilton in a phenomenological appraisal of the open landscape of Leskernick in Cornwall (Bender, Hamilton and Tilley 1997). They also presented an innovative format of site log from a variety of viewpoints, alternative points of view of project participants, and created a multivocal narrative of fieldwork and of the experience of place.

Julian Thomas offered another assessment and discussion of the relationship of human beings to landscape and its implications in the creation and maintaining of social identity individual and collective memory in 1996's 'Time, culture and identity': he stressed that 'identity of place has a narrative and accretional quality' (*ibidem*: 83), drawing on Lewis Binford's statement that 'to understand the past we must understand places' (Binford 1982: 6). He took the instances of Maiden Castle and the Mount Pleasant henge to illustrate his arguments, to discuss how people manipulated visibility and space to achieve specific purposes (Thomas 1996: 193, 197).

In 1997 Mark Edmonds published "Ancestral Geographies of the Neolithic", an analysis of cultural practices and material culture in an experimental format including snippets of modern fictional narrative as a commentary to each chapter: the author wanted to dispel the obstinately functionalist approach to Neolithic landscape in favour of a more sensual experience, a vision of places inhabited by gods, ancestors and the dead. According

to Edmonds, the force of ritual experience 'connected people to the land, strengthened their sense of identity' (Edmonds 1997: introduction).

Richard Bradley, in his *Archaeology of Natural Places* (2000) developed the latter concept more explicitly: he argued that in order to gain a real insight into symbolic landscapes, be they monumentalised or not, we need to encompass all visual elements, from the most imposing of constructions to the most humble of creeks, bogs or natural rock clusters.

Chris Tilley and Wayne Bennet wrote the article 'An archaeology of super-natural places' in 2001, defining those places in a prehistoric landscape that were made the attention of ritual behaviour and depositions and yet left unaltered: 'super-natural' is an apt label for them. It is important, according to the authors to distinguish and clearly identify those special locales in a natural landscape where ancient populations perceived and worshipped supernatural forces from those loci which they actually built upon to make the connection between place and divinity immortal. This distinction could mark fundamental differences in cult entity and scope, if not in significance and purpose.

Also in 2001 came the phenomenological account by Whitehouse (Whitehouse 2001) where she recounted the descent in two caves mentioned in the above section. Here the primacy of sight in relation to the other senses is challenged in favour of a kinaesthetic experience of cramped, physically restraining places such as caves and rock crevices. She approaches the understanding of cult from an embodied perspective, ascribing ritual signification to natural features of the caves that marked points in which things were revealed, hidden, or where space dictated an individual's manner of perceiving events and places.

The Materiality of Stone by Chris Tilley and Wayne Bennett (2004) is an account of the application of phenomenological principles to four sites, and advocates a richer, more dense narrative and more 'evocative' illustrations to express in words and pictures the impressions and sensations experienced by someone in the field, albeit this endeavour is not accomplished in the volume itself.

I shall conclude this overview of landscape archaeology publications (which is by no means exhaustive) by mentioning the recent, comprehensive review of landscape archaeological studies, Matthew Johnson's 2006 volume *Ideas of landscape-an introduction*: this is a substantial and in-depth critical review of traditions of landscape study, describing the two main ways of approaching the concepts of landscape and place in Anglo-Saxon literature: the theoretically-informed approach and the humanistic approach. The discussed examples range from the Romantic vision of landscape found in Wordsworth (Johnson 2006:

169) to WG Hoskins' local historical approach to the English countryside, and culminate in the more recent, theoretically-driven accounts of Chris Tilley and other landscape archaeologists, and finally dealing with political and contested nature of colonial landscapes (185 ff.). The author competently and critically drafts a chronological as well as thematic development of concepts of landscape and how theories have been borrowed from, and influenced, other disciplines.

Overall, it can be seen that while processual archaeology generated many useful ideas about the 'physical', practical and 'cognitive' relationship of people and place, post-processual archaeology brought up new questions about the relationship between people and the environment taking into account new factors, such as the human body and social behaviour; new theoretical perspectives, increasingly borrowing concepts and methods from cognate disciplines such as anthropology (i.e. Ingold 1993) and human geography (De Nardi forthcoming a) aim to gain a fuller understanding of the complex place dynamics.

The main drawback of many landscape archaeology studies (Tilley 1994 and 2004), a point I make briefly below, and address more fully in a paper in preparation (De Nardi forthcoming a) is that analysis of a past landscape is often done in a 'vacuum', by isolating the period in question and more or less disregarding later place dynamics, events that shape the current condition and significance of places.

2.6.3 The archaeology of votive depositions in the landscape

The tradition of researching cult and ritual and of writing about it differs greatly in the Anglo-Saxon world as opposed to the rest of Europe. Scholars on the Continent in particular are much more concerned with the quantitative and site-specific presentation of data, with a lesser focus on the underlying significance and interpretation of processes leading to the establishment of cult places. Below is a selection of papers and books I have read throughout the course of my research and compared/contrasted with my own approach to material culture and landscape.

Nordquist and Linders 1987 (eds.) offered an edited volume (*Gifts to the Gods*) dealing with votive deposits across Europe. The well-written and wide-ranging papers ranged from accounts of weapon depositions in wet places to hoards of figurines in a variety of landscape settings (Åström 1987, Fridh-Haneson 1987, Edlund 1987), but failed to convey the sense of embodiment and experience of the agents of depositions.

Ingrid Edlund (Edlund 1987) offered a spatial and inter-site contextualisation of votive deposits in Etruria and Magna Graecia. I will deal with her book in greater detail in the following sub-section.

In a 1988 paper dealing mostly with the hoards in association with burials in the landscapes of British Bronze Age, Needham (Needham 1988) observed that the display of prestige bronze implements (such as axes), weapons and ornaments at "special" locations such as henges would have been a paramount element of cult.

Bradley (Bradley 1990) analysed four case studies, taking into account the natural landscape in his assessment of monuments, votive depositions, hoarding, tool making and distribution. He reviewed the 'typological' approach to votive deposits typical of earlier material culture studies (Bradley 1990: 31) and advocated a contextualised approach by taking into account the circumstances by which they became buried or deposited in culturally-meaningful ways, and by looking at site-specific features of deposits rather than treating them in bulk. He brought together a diachronic, thematic book on the specific category of 'hoards and votive deposits', focussing on the deposition of weapons, figurines and special metal artefacts in wet places in prehistory, i.e. from the Neolithic through to the Iron Age, seeking the motivations behind the shift of offerings from wet places to dry land and a shift in the nature of the offerings through time.

Several studies have appeared in the last decades about European votive deposits and their context.

Edlund (1987) brought forward a geographically-defined work of synthesis on the context and nature of rural votive deposits and shrines in Etruria and in Magna Graecia in the period 700-400 BC. She explored the connection between settled space and sacred space, and she considered the symbolic function and perception of certain natural features such as springs, peaks and groves. Edlund argues that cult can provide insights into the 'historical and sociological' patterns in both her study areas - Etruria and Magna Graecia- and shed light on the dynamics leading to the development of urbanisation and cultural contact (with Greek colonists) (Edlund 1987: 28-29). She presents her evidence systematically and by subdividing sanctuary contexts in relation to settlements. Her stated aim is to provide a coherent picture of extra-urban and rural cult places in her study areas and to open up new avenues of research.

Although very thorough and well researched, Edlund's study repeatedly makes the assumption that 'nature' is a force that needs to be tamed by people to create 'place' (Edlund 1987: 30, 35, 37, 52). She also lays a strong emphasis on the dichotomy inside/outside as sacred/profane (ibid. 37).

Cocchi Genick limited the scope of her research to ritual cave sites during the Bronze Age, discussing the importance of water in 'abnormal form' following Whitehouse 1991, and the extent and social implications of water cults in the study area. (Cocchi Genick 1999).

Another exhaustive publication was that entitled "Kult der vorzeit in den Alpen" (Zemmer-Plank 2002,), a collection of papers that painstakingly listed the known votive deposits and cult places in the central and lower Alpine area (here meant to encompass the piedmont and upper Po Plain as well), but as the publication was intended as a companion to an exhibition, each site is treated with the succinct and brief style of a catalogue entry.

These works made use of data from survey and excavation, with little attention to the wider landscape details and perceptual element that is intrinsic in the religious experience. Where an interpretation is provided (cf. Bradley 1990), it tends to encompass the trends and diachronic process of depositions, without lingering on the reasons behind the act of deposition of particular special objects in the landscape. Or in the case of Edlund, she opens her book with mentions of theoretical approaches to the study of religion (Eliade especially, cf. Edlund 1987: 30 ff.) but fails to apply them to her sites.

More recently, this bias towards somewhat 'abstract' accounts of cult has been put right: key papers from the *Cult in Context* conference in Cambridge (2006) provide new insights on the rationale of cult in European prehistory from a holistic, place-oriented and critical perspective. Silvia Alfayé, mentioned above (Alfayé 2007) presents an overview of the topographical and social contexts of object dedication and deposition in the landscapes of Iberia; Letizia Ceccarelli (2007) presents a study of votive depositions in Rome in the mid-Republican period in which she shows how sanctuaries develop in *Latium Vetus* and how the variety of dedicated objects inform social structure and the relationship between votive objects and the identity of the believers, advocating contextualisation of the objects in their topographical, social and performative elements as paramount (Ceccarelli 322-323).

In the same volume, Sarah Ralph (2007) presents an analysis of the deposition and exposure of severed human heads as trophies and apotropaic devices in Iron Age Europe, prompting a very interesting discussion about the embodied quality of ritual, and particularly with objects closely associated with the human body, such as food and wine.

Studies of votive depositions in context, ever developing and increasingly complex and theoretically-driven, are opening up new insights on the social context of individual and communal acts of dedication of objects to the deities that have deep implications for the social structure of the groups involved, and ultimately touch upon cosmological notions.

2.7 Spatial analysis and the GIS revolution in the understanding of prehistoric cultural landscapes

I will now briefly introduce the issue of Geographical Information Systems in relation to archaeological landscape studies and, more specifically, define the role of GIS within my own research framework and methodology.

Over the last 20 years or so, more and more archaeologists turned their attention to spatial analysis and digital visualisations to interpret and make sense of the positioning of monuments in prehistoric and historic landscapes.

Despite the need to graphically represent cultural landscapes, the academic community realised that the digital medium was not entirely ready to cater for the particular requirements of a humanistic approach to landscape.

Geographical Information Systems, a relational database of georeferenced locations, spatial patterns and geographical entities, was introduced to plot out interactive, multilayered maps displaying a vast array of topographical entities, alphanumeric data and so forth. The number of operations and exercises that GIS allows scholars of landscape archaeology to do is staggering: among the most popular operations are viewshed analyses, digital terrain models, digital elevation models, 3D views of landforms and features, thematically selective mapping of certain site features or structures, site clustering, and, above all, visibility and intervisibility analyses.

Therefore, the application of GIS to archaeological landscapes seemed to mark a huge success and step forward in the representation of spatial relationships and patterns pertaining to specific chronological phases, cultures or simply cultural regions.

Then the trouble started. Users realised that GIS was unable to represent an equally long list of important archaeological factors and issues: as appreciated and pointed out by scholars of the calibre of Vince Gaffney, Z. Stancic, Helen Watson, Marcos Llobera, Mark Lake and Patricia Woodman, spatial analysis software does not offer a sufficiently humanistic rendition of landscapes.

Gaffney Stancic and Watson (Gaffney et al. 1995) argued for a more humanistic approach to GIS software and applications and against the two-dimensional, bird's eye view given by maps.

Llobera (Llobera 1996: 612) criticised the traditional environmentally deterministic use of GIS and argued that determinism is not inbuilt in the spatial analysis tool in itself, but is rather a concept transferred into the software by users with specific environmental research agendas (ibidem: 613).

The sense of place, of fascination, and the significance of landscapes are not easily conveyed by the digital medium, just as these sensory impressions could not be expressed on a conventional two-dimensional paper map. As Thomas (Thomas 1993: 25) pointed out, the image of a landscape we achieve from air photographs and distribution maps is something totally alien from the vision of the land that ancient individuals would have had.

The very concept of the map, implying simultaneous vision of every single element of the terrain is an unrealistic exercise (Thomas 1993: 27; Barrett 1999b: 23), and as such not very helpful in interpreting, understanding, “feeling” past landscapes. This notion originated in Renaissance art, when landscape was viewed as an external entity from which the spectator could step back and gaze upon it in its entirety (Barrett 1999b: 22 ff.) and in the professed objectivity of Enlightenment cartography, and has since migrated to more modern media of visual representation of space.

Another inevitable drawback of GIS representation, as much as that of traditional two-dimensional mapping, lies in the fact that sight is the dominant factor and the unique medium by which one literally ‘visualises’ the landscape thus represented, when sight is but one of five senses that can be used to experience, feel and interact with one’s surroundings and may not have necessarily been the dominant one (Bender 1993: 1).

It can be argued that individuals in the past would have relied on the other four senses to orientate, navigate or simply feel the landscape, the space where they lived their lives (Relph 1985 [2000]: 26 ff.).

The ongoing development of new programs geared toward a more humanistic stance on landscape can hopefully obviate this fault: GIS is not strictly a machine-based application and, although there are clear limitations in what it can represent, and how, there is room for improvement. In addition to this, the human factor in the field is vital to the experience and interpretation of past cultural landscapes: one can move about, experience things and places.

Admittedly, most ancient smells and sounds are lost forever (Bender 1993: 3), even though recent experiments with acoustics (i.e. Watson 2006 and Watson & Keating 2000) promise to shed new light on site and landscape perception by playing on unfaltering factors such as the distance at which sounds carry, allowing for different tree cover and changing weather conditions (Hamilton and Whitehouse 2006, 163): overall, we can gain a fuller feel for a place by being there than simply by looking at it on a map or ArcView layer.

The new tools offered by technologies such as GIS can only represent a step forward in the right direction, in the systematic, objective analysis of an often subjective and speculative realm: the human perception of landscape.

The concept of visibility (see above) as a valuable insight into human perception is potentially quantifiable by digital mapping tools that can extrapolate impressions and observations in the field to the digital medium and therefore reproduce the effect and experience for all scholars to come to terms with. The subjective experience of some phenomenological exercises can be potentially objectified, rationalised and conveyed by GIS

based visibility and intervisibility studies, aiding a comprehension of spatial and locational patterns of prominent foci in the landscape, in relation to settlements, to landforms and to each other. Important issues such as distant vs. near visibility of landscape elements (Bender, Hamilton and Tilley 1997: 157) can also be expressed through GIS viewsheds.

What these admittedly helpful technologies need, however, is to never lose track of the necessarily blurred, often hard to define essence of human attachment, concept and use of their surroundings. A string of sterile mathematical algorithms can barely strive to capture and recreate the complexity of human relationships and responses to landforms, sites and locales.

What are the implications of GIS for my study?

I will use GIS technology in the present thesis to represent and analyse two particular cultural landscapes and to plot out the findings of my surveying fieldwork in North-eastern Veneto and the Este area (see following chapter). I am fully aware of the limitations of such an exercise in the understanding and interpretation of votive deposits, but I feel that loading and presenting maps of the chosen study area in ArcView will help with one of my research questions, namely whether there was a connection between particular topographical locations and the establishment of votive deposits/shrines.

2.8 Discussion

As we have seen in this chapter, much attention is rightfully paid to the human aspect of place, space and environment, which created new stimuli to study past landscapes from a human point of view, and to make sense of how ancient communities perceived and interacted with the places they lived in.

With all this in mind, an obvious pitfall of humanistic landscape reconstructions and interpretation lies in the fact that we are trying to retrieve something that is elusive to say the least. Past perception of landscape depended upon a variety of factors unknown to us; we cannot easily gain the big picture by an analysis of the individual elements composing it. The leitmotif of understanding needs to be found elsewhere.

Bradley's and Tilley's work was especially inspiring for me, particularly Tilley 1994 and Bradley 2000; what I think is missing from Bradley's arguments however is an analysis of the extent to which different types of votive deposits occur in particular locations: are any patterns present? He could have also further expanded his assessment of how deposit types change through time, and how the kinds of votaries evolve. What ex-votos can tell us about their dedicators and recipients is another matter altogether.

As for Tilley, the main drawback of his arguments, as Bradley pointed out (Bradley 2000: 42), was that his conclusions were very much location-particular and could not be

easily tested by others because a methodology of his findings, or guidelines for repeating his phenomenological experiments were not provided. It was very much a one man exercise, and as such not particularly apt to create a sustainable model or methodology for further studies on a broader level.

2.9 Conclusion

The preceding chapter illustrated how the current state of research into Venetic cult and votive deposits is still largely inadequate in terms of the understanding of sacred sites in their meaningful entirety, encompassing their landscape setting and embodied experience of place and material culture.

In Anglo-Saxon academia things are moving fast and we have seen in the present chapter what a promising future lies ahead for the study of ancient landscapes and people's awareness of their lived-in environment.

In the following chapter I will outline the research framework and methodology I adopted for my project. In chapter 4 I will present a detailed account and discussion of Venetic votive deposits, in an attempt to convey their complexity and fascinating variety, again as a step forward from the generalising oversimplification of traditional academic trends in that field.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I introduced recent theories and methodological trends that influenced and shaped the way archaeologists and human geographers approach the complex relationships between people and the lived environment. I have also discussed the current state of research on Venetic votive deposits and identified various inadequacies in the current practice.

This chapter outlines my research design and describes the methodology supporting my fieldwork and interpretation. It provides a feasibility assessment and introduces my case studies, twenty Iron Age Venetic sites in their local landscape setting; it also argues the usefulness of such an approach for the matter to hand, applied to both Venetic sites and landscape studies in general.

On a more general level, I shall ask how and to what extent a phenomenological approach can provide new insights and a greater understanding of landscape and cult practices.

Sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 outline my theoretical standpoint, methodology, project preparation and the actual practice of my fieldwork.

Sections 3.5 and 3.6 integrate landscape data with a discussion of Venetic deities and votive objects.

Section 3.7 draws preliminary conclusions and presents an overview of the fieldwork and methodology prior to the in-depth description and discussion of twenty case studies in the following chapter (5A to 5E).

3.2 General perspective on research

As seen in the preceding chapter, a more holistic and broad-minded outlook than usual is necessary to make sense of many so-called cultural landscapes.

3.2.1 Starting point

Archaeologists need to bring their idea of landscapes beyond a mere backdrop for monuments and activities forming the archaeological record, to a vision and an experience closer to the environment perceived through the five senses by individuals (Thomas 1991: 30 ff.; Thomas 1993: 19 ff.; van Dommelen 1999: 278 ff.).

Generally speaking, people past and present- allowing for regional and society-specific behaviours and perceptions of landscape- interact with landscape in meaningful

ways. They perceive their environment in different ways according to whether they are looking at it, travelling through it or remembering it (cf. Mugerauer 1985).

Individuals do not only walk over the land thinking about it in terms of where the best pasture land is, where the best clay source or most convenient stone quarry is located: they also marvel at the sun setting over the hills, hear the murmur of streams and see the bubbling of a spring, they perceive the faraway mountains or the sea as mighty, mysterious forces; past peoples perceived the landscape as populated by sacred beings who had to be respected, if not venerated. Often they would think in terms of the safety of their settlement and their livestock, but they would also have been aware of the forces presiding over their land, consciously or subconsciously associating places with the power of their ancestors, fearing the mythical places inhabited by them and the constructions they left behind (Barrett 1999a: 258 ff.; Tilley 1994, chapter 1). "The gods are regularly encountered in views from mountain tops" (Relph 1985 (2000): 20). They were likely to think of their land as their own, and their ancestors'.

The sacred, economic, social arenas and values embedded in the land would have made sense as an unquestionable whole to past inhabitants, who would not have broken it down analytically into different facets like we do, nor would they have necessarily discerned and experienced the different functions of their lived in space in rational ways (Bender, Hamilton and Tilley 1997, 149; Barrett 1999a, 263; van Dommelen 1999, 281-282).

The way we, as modern individuals, comprehend a landscape, its form, shape, flavour, and meanings is likely to be different from the degree and quality of perception, significance and values attributed by a prehistoric individual to the same stretch of land, quite apart from obvious cultural and social peculiarities of various communities and groups, and the morphological and environmental changes that would have occurred in the intervening time (cf. Craik 1986: 48, 54 ff.). Moreover, biases in perception originate from individual biographies, personal experience and social memory. To put it in Crumley's words, "In the study of sacred landscapes, the importance of memory and culture cannot be overstated" (Crumley 1999: 2731).

Many of the biases and distortions have in my opinion been created by the strenuous emphasis laid on built monuments and structures as opposed to natural elements of human landscapes. Bearing in mind that the whole of a landscape is a cultural product as long as human beings travel through it, see it, interact with it and dwell in it, the varied elements composing it, from rock to spring to megalith are equally significant in the interpretation of past social, ideological, cosmological and ritual processes (Crumley 1999: 270).

Obviously the study of built monuments, more explicitly identifiable with people and their purposes, can prove more rewarding to the archaeologist seeking to explain social and ideological customs than a hill top: but a hilltop may be equally important in the perception of an ancient community. And that is where the real challenge lies: in making sense of the elusive, subtle remnants of the motivations behind the act of making natural locations special.

The relatively scarce attention paid by archaeologists to natural, unaltered landscapes features and places must be ascribed to the lack of visible, substantial, long-term human interaction with those locales; used to interacting and dealing with monuments, structures and physical remains of occupation by humans, many field professionals and scholars are sometimes puzzled by votive deposits, hoards of material and tool assemblages in apparently uninhabited and un-built up locations, or natural features in the land (Tilley and Bennet 2001: 335).

Often the extent, quality and quantity of material recovered from these places are so appreciable that many questions spring to mind: why do we encounter episodes of worship, material assemblages or tool depositions at specific natural locales (Bradley 2000: 53 ff.)? Why were certain locales purposely built up and thus altered by people and others left intact, albeit attracting special attention? How did monument building affect the perception and significance of a place (Bradley 2000, 101)? Did it add to the significance of place, alter it substantially or did it even obliterate a value system to create a brand new one? Such questions are central to my own arguments in the present thesis.

3.2.2 My stance

I take a humanistic stance to the issue of landscape assessment. I avoid the conventional concept of "space" and approach my research area as "place" or network of places, locales constituting a cultural entity, and a web of ritually significant places. 'Space' is experienced directly as having room in which to move, and becomes a network of experienced places (Tuan 1977: 12).

My analysis follows both a top-down and a bottom-up approach: it starts with an assessment of votive deposits as a whole, their spatial relationships and material culture features, and this knowledge feeds into the in-depth assessment of the individual sites, their topographical context, material culture and cult practices: the information gathered from the individual case studies leads to a holistic understanding and informed overall assessment of votive deposits, their spatial relationship with settlements and cemeteries and finally to a contextualisation of sacred sites in the wider landscape settings of the Veneto.

The main endeavour of my analysis is a topographical and social contextualisation of votive deposits in the Iron Age and their spatial-chronological- symbolic patterns.

Another important aspect of my overall analysis is the quantification and analysis of places with an earlier use -prior to the use of the locale for votive deposition. I identify places with an already established use by local people as opposed to empty places, or places that may have been used and known by groups and communities but not preserved any traces of such use, or places that, by their own nature, may have forbidden the alteration of the place. This may inform us of the importance of the past and place memory in the establishment of a sacred site: I base my assessment in this sense on archaeological evidence for Bronze Age, Neolithic and even earlier activity at or very near each location and whether that activity had ritual, settlement or production purposes. I also seek to ascertain whether continuity of use can be argued for any of these sites on the basis of archaeological evidence, and to establish if and when chronological gaps in use and periods of abandonment occurred. I also adopt a 'retrospective' approach to place significance, looking at past meanings entrenched in the landscape through the filter of modernity.

I make cross-comparisons between different type-sites in their landscape settings: if shrines were established in connection with a settlement, one very important reason for doing so might concern a symbolic protection of that particular centre and its inhabitants, as well as expressing a concern with topographical criteria.

I make a further distinction based on archaeological evidence between ritual sites that were monumentalised at some point of their history as cult places and those that were not. I aim to establish whether the nearness to settlements or cemeteries had a significant correlation with the human alteration of certain votive deposits. I ask (in chapter 6) whether alteration and building were aimed at, or necessary to, making a place "official" (Bradley 2000: 103 *ff.*) by permanent or more visible by means of structures, or whether criteria such as the sanctity of nature seem to have been the determining factors for not building structures at certain locations.

In addition to this, I seek to determine precisely when sites were monumentalised, by whom and how long after the establishment of a specific meaningful locale. In the following chapters I will argue that the presence or absence of structures is not a dominant factor in my interpretation of places, and advocate a centrality of place in every interpretation, moving beyond the culture/nature impediment.

Also, I apply a phenomenological assessment to sites, their landscapes and the votive objects that were dedicated at these locations. See section 3.2.4 below.

3.2. 3 Method

In my thesis I address questions about my data – the sacred sites and votive deposits of Iron Age Veneto – using a multidisciplinary approach or methodology.

This method consists of:

- Past landscape assessment

I have consulted the existing literature to find analyses and descriptions of what the landscape looked like in the Iron Age. This was particularly useful for the Po plain sites in and around Este, and particularly concerning the course of the river Adige (Capuis 1993, Balista and Rinaldi 2002)

- Present landscape assessment and description

I attempt faithfully and exhaustively to describe the environment and settings in which the archaeological sites are today.

I identify present natural features in the landscape and assess the likelihood of the presence in situ in the Iron Age and whether similar features were part of the wider landscape settings of the votive deposits.

I attempt to read the visible modern landscape with an eye to the palaeo-environmental data in my possession.

- In depth topographical contextualisation of fifteen Venetic votive deposits plus five “anomalous” or “special” sites
- Topographical contextualisation of settlement sites in the Iron Age: on which terrain they occurred, whether on lowland or highland, in proximity to rivers or other territorial features, their occurrence on specific landforms
- Topographical contextualisation of burial sites in the Iron Age: how they related spatially to the local topography, whether on lowland or on high places, where and how far from settlement sites they were situated
- Contextualisation of votive deposits in the Iron Age at the level of individual sites: the spatial relationship between sacred sites and settlements and cemeteries
- GIS representation and analysis of the wider landscape settings, highlighting relationships between settlements/shrines and cemeteries/shrines, as well as of shrines in relation to each other. This tool brings out topographical characteristics and distances, adding to horizontal distances as measured on maps and my own visual impressions during fieldwork.

For ease of representation, digital handling and practicality's sake I selected two resolutions. A greater 1:5000 resolution for two particular study areas (Este and Vittorio Veneto and

surrounding countryside: the latter consists of a 1:2000 map used as the basis for C1), and smaller resolutions [1:25000 circa] offered by GoogleEarth and other internet map sites.

- Individuation of patterns and differences between site types and their wider geographical settings: identification of regional or area-specific criteria for the identification and selection of locales for cult purposes
- Archival research: I researched historic documents and historic maps, and conducted internet searches to explore place histories, place name studies and local geographies in selected areas of the Veneto, but in particular in the Vittorio Veneto and Monte Altare area (cf. chapters 5 and 6 and appendix 3). In so doing I gained a 'bigger picture' of several parts of the study region and precious insights into the *longue durée* of a Venetic 'sense of place'
- Phenomenological observations and reading of places (see below)
- Votive object assessment: How were these special objects likely to be experienced, where, and by whom? How did people relate to them on a bodily and sensual level? Do the votives represent in any way the location in which they were dedicated or found? If so, what influence did local topography or landscape features have on the style or nature of the votives and did this occur at all locations or more prominently at specific places?

The methodology for my project stems from several sources: my own past and present experiments in the field, geographical and archaeological literature (mainly Tuan 1977, Relph 1976, 1981 and 2000, Seamon and Mugerauer 1985 [2000] (eds.), Wylie 2007) spatial theory (Pittaluga 1987 and Jakle 1987) historic and archival research, previous endeavours in the field of landscape phenomenology conducted by other scholars, fictional works dealing with a phenomenology of person and place (Rodenbach 1889 and 1892) and basic principles of extensive survey. Archaeological works such as Amosti 1996; Ashmore & Knapp 1999 (eds.); Barrett 1999a and 1999b; Bender, Hamilton & Tilley 1997; Bradley 2000; Criado Boado, Santos Estévez & Villoch Vasquéz 2001; Higginbottom, Smith, Simpson & Clay 2001; Pryor 1995; Richards 1996; Tilley 1994; Whitehouse 2001; Hamilton and Whitehouse 2006 were particularly influential.

3.2.4 Presentation and layout

At this point I would like to explain why I have chosen a certain way of illustrating this thesis, or rather, why and how I have sought to 'bring the project to life', to tell a story rather than just displaying and discussing data. I have created the site 'experiential maps' as a novel, dynamic and sensual way of reproducing my experiences in the field, as well as contextualising the objects typical of each site in their surroundings and situating the places and sights that inspired specific impressions while visiting the sites. These maps (20, one per case study) are bound in the main text of the thesis but C1, the 'pilot map' is attached

as an A2 sheet inside the back cover of the thesis, so that it can be better viewed, navigated and 'experienced' in its dense multi-perspective complexity. Also included separately, for convenience's sake, is the legend or key to symbols found on the maps.

Text in italics throughout the thesis and in text-boxes on the twenty experiential maps represents field considerations and description of on-site experiences drawn from my own fieldwork diary.

In addition to a 'thick description' (cf. Geertz 1975) of places in the text, a more visual aspect of my phenomenological field exercise appears throughout the thesis - in pictures. These include original sketches and maps with penned in details: I scanned in maps I have used in the field, sometimes torn, often creased and worn-looking, for that is the closest I got to recreating my being there, of evoking the sense of place intrinsic in field visits.

My use of maps and photographs to accompany, and to enrich, the main text of the thesis serve two purposes: to document the current state of play, that is, to provide a visual record of the sites and places I visited during fieldwork, and to open up rationalised landscapes (treated in the existing literature as blank backdrops to the creation of material culture) to irrational interpretations and a multiplicity of meanings. The maps and photographs express my own perception and interpretation of these meaningful places, but they afford insights into a novel way to interpret them, one taking into account the powerful concepts of embodiment and perception. Neither maps or photographs claim ownership of the places I mapped out and photographed- they do not claim to be representations of how past individuals or social groups experienced them, but can be a starting point for a sensual reading of the many meanings embedded in the landscape.

3.2.5 Phenomenology

As mentioned above, the most prominent phenomenological applications to landscape studies have a common feature: the landscapes being 'experienced' were largely devoid of modern constructions and interference (cf. Tilley 1994 and 2004).

The literature implicitly argues that in order to conduct a phenomenological analysis on the field, at least two fundamental criteria should be met:

- The local landscape must be if possible devoid of modern constructions that would distract and influence the visual, sensory and emotional experience of the participants, although assessment is still possible in case of visual disturbances
- The landscape should have remained essentially similar, in terms of land morphology, to how it was in the period under investigation

As a result, the ideal study area would be a rural environment in an area not too extensively urbanised, and possibly one without too many distracting elements such as overhead power cables, electric pylons, motorways, noise pollution and so forth.

Now, following from what I knew of the location of the various Venetic votive deposits, I distinguished between those where a phenomenological study would be thought quite difficult to achieve (following the above criteria) and those where it could be attempted.

I decided to test the validity or feasibility of the phenomenological and experiential exercise in the archaeological literature. Whereas most of the projects mentioned in the preceding section dealt with largely unaltered landscapes and places, I decided to take up the challenge of 'feeling' and interpreting landscapes buried underneath urban areas and encased in traces of subsequent dwellings, worship or reuse. This is the case of the urban landscapes of Este, Montegrotto Terme, Montebelluna and Padua, but also of the tourist attraction of Lagole and of the modern cultural landmarks of Monte Altare (the cross) and Monte Calvario (the Via Crucis, fig. 3.1).



Figure 3.1. The last cross marking the Via Crucis on Monte Calvario, Auronzo (47)

I also moved my analysis of place beyond the field exercise per se by looking at local histories and traced the long term significance of these places and landscapes. Furthermore, the main motive behind my phenomenological investigation is that of establishing a link

between a place's significance and its landscape setting, regardless of the modern landforms.

The fact that subsequent structures were added to the landscape adds onto, and does not take anything away from, the previous meanings and significance of places. Modern buildings are not the enemy: they are simply subsequent episodes in a place's biography (Craik 1986: 56). Their very topographical context tells us much about local patterns of significance, and the longevity of certain locations is often explained by the fact that they coincide with the best archaeologically documented sites to date.

During fieldwork I attempted to assess the experience of being at a site using all five senses, but I found that sight was the predominant factor. At a few locations smell was predominant (Montegrotto- 10, Lova- 1 and Altino La Fornace -26) and hearing was a determining factor at one site, the cave of Bocca Lorenza (36). The bias in interpretation of the sites lies in the predominance of vision over the other senses at the majority of the locations I visited, and I am very much aware of the shortcomings that this implies.

From a methodological point of view, I decided to conduct fieldwork- and phenomenological assessments- before embarking upon GIS analysis, so as to avoid biases given by my knowledge of the spatial setup of the local landscapes and patterns emerging from the spatial data.

Furthermore, my humanistic outlook on landscape led me to choose the medium of photography and personal description alongside two-dimensional maps to more "faithfully" capture, represent, document and describe the meaningful landscapes I visited. The choice to document sites by photography is part of my original approach to landscape analysis, but I also make use of maps to orientate, reach the locations, and I ultimately relied on map representation in the GIS. Photographs aid, and inform, my interpretation of sites.

I am very aware of the pitfalls represented by subjectivity and speculative inferences, of which scholars such as Tilley are accused for not providing a systematic written account of the whole of his phenomenological outings (Fleming 1999: 121 *ff.*). I want to ensure my account is systematic, so that others can not only have access to my field results but also be able to critique and interpret my results.

In order to overcome the circularity of arguments pertaining to the significance of place and to minimise biases in phenomenological description and interpretation, I produced a fieldwork recording form for all sites I decided to assess. The forms, which are included at the end of the fieldwork chapter (5) and in the appendix (appendix 2), are a diagnostic checklist of the elements that might be useful in understanding a place and its surroundings, from a morphological, archaeological, geographical and experiential point of view.

This written record is backed up by a detailed photographic record and clear indications of the location of the sites by including modern roads and landmarks in the experiential maps (see section 3.2.4 above). This information makes it possible for others to reach these places with ease and repeat or challenge the exercise if they so wish.

3.2.6 Data collection and sampling

The database I have compiled consists of forty-three known votive deposits in the Veneto established between the 8th century BC (Early-Mid Iron Age) and the Romanisation period (2nd century BC). I have collected all available data and information on these sites by going through the existing literature, by visiting sites and local museums, looking at local publications and by interviewing archaeologists and scholars involved in the study of these sites. I found that often a single article or even monograph on a site did not include all the information I needed in order to gain a full picture of a site, even in terms of its actual location.

These forty-three sites include four in the area bordering the traditionally "Raetic" culture but that display Venetic cult features (see section 4.4.1 below).

The relatively low number of sites and the diversity and uniqueness of most deposits made this undertaking somewhat problematic; potential biases in the assessment of these locales are embedded in the very nature of my sample: as the sites are quantitatively limited, to attempt generic discussions or identify patterns proved a testing task, but all the more challenging in this respect.

In my database, I list sites from south to north for consistency. The non-cult sites listed are those encountered during fieldwork and not the all settlements and cemeteries in Iron Age Veneto.

The main obstacle I encountered in the early days of my fieldwork was the unreliability of topographical references to the votive deposits. The literature on excavations and findings of material interpreted as "pertaining to cult" was highly specific and thorough in terms of the iconographic-stylistic attributes of votive objects but vague in relation to the precise topographical context or the locality of finds and even excavations (if it mentioned them at all); this is either due to the author's concern about illegal excavations or out of ignorance, or indifference to, the exact provenance of the objects. This inaccuracy led me to substantial and time consuming background searches in books and local publications, internet searches and talks with local archaeological societies and local residents in order to compile an up-to-date list of all existing ascertained votive deposits and their precise locations.

I then assessed the feasibility of landscape assessment, interpretation and phenomenological considerations. This narrowed down the choice to sites I was able to identify geographically; subsequently I thought about how many sites would constitute a sufficient and, at least to some degree, representative sample.

I found myself with a choice of twenty-five sites, and I chose fifteen that would be representative in geographical terms, whose locations cover all the main topographic milieus of the Veneto region (mountains, piedmont, plains and lagoon) and are suitable for an in-depth landscape assessment (see below for site names).

I would like to point out that I deliberately excluded Este Baratella (3) from the choice of sites where I conducted fieldwork: much as I acknowledge the enormous significance of this well-known Venetic sacred site, it was a 'political' decision on my part to bring to the fore instead many of the sites that have never before been published, marginal sites and small-scale locales, rather than the single best known and most written about site of all. In addition to the primary fifteen sites I carried out fieldwork at five more sites: sites that were complex, non-cult or one-off sites: I list these below in sub-section 3.3 after the main sites.

I decided on the undertaking of an in-depth field and analytical assessment of fifteen votive deposit locations (see section 3.3 below) which I will compare and contrast with data pertaining to the rest of the Venetic landscape in order to suggest and argue the rationale behind the choice of a particular place or milieu for the establishment of votive deposits, as opposed to settlements and cemeteries.

To ensure my fieldwork would be feasible I selected those deposits and sites of which I knew the precise location, given that some of the votive deposits are only known by vague topographical and place name references rather than by the specific find spot of the votive objects. I then selected a cross section of the sacred sites according to their geographical distribution in the study area to reflect the topographical variety of the region. After establishing which locations would be viable for landscape work I decided to carry out in-depth analysis at fifteen locales representative of the various type of sacred site: urban deposits (refer to chapter 4 section 4.5.1 *ff.*), suburban or extra-urban deposits (4.5.2), and rural votive deposits.

3.3 The case studies: fifteen "special" sites in their settings

The fieldwork I carried out at these fifteen sites is described in one all-encompassing fieldwork chapter, 5, where I group them by broad geographical locations in sections A to D.

The table below lists the sites in South - North order and following the order they appear in the following chapters. The numbers in brackets refer to their ID number in appendix-1.

Section A- Po Plain	Section B- Lagoon	Section C- Piedmont	Section D- Mountains
Este Morlungo (2): small votive deposit (5 th -4 th c BC) located along the bank of the river Adige in the SW of Este, bordering with the cemetery of Capodaglio	Lova (1): 3rd-2nd c BC Southern lagoon sanctuary complex situated near the river Brenta	Castello Roganzuolo (36): 5 th - 4 th c BC hilltop votive deposit in the Northeastern piedmont with a complex multi-period spatial distribution of finds	Lagole di Calalzo (45): a long-lived cult place on a major transalpine communication route In the Alpine Cadore in the Upper Piave Valley, dating from the 5 th -4 th c BC to the 4th AD and dedicated to deity(ies) presiding over the cult of salubrious springs and water
Este Meggiaro (6): 5th-3rd c BC initiation centre in North- Northeast of Este	Altino, La Fornace (26): sanctuary in the Northern lagoon, probably the oldest Venetic cult place following recent news that the oldest level dates to the 11 th - 10 th c BC	Monte Altare (40): a hill top cult place in Vittorio Veneto, in the NE piedmont with a long-lived use from the 6 th c BC to the 4 th AD	Monte Nenz, Trichiana (46): a hilltop votive deposit with a problematic chronological sequence and votives belonging to the multi-cultural Alpine area
Este Caldevego/ Colle del Principe (7): 5th c BC- 3rd c AD votive deposit on the top or slopes of a hill N of Este	Altichiero (20): a river votive deposit N of Padua with offerings dating from the 6th c BC to the 4th AD	Col Castelir, Villa di Villa (42): a 4th c BC- 4th AD hill top cult place established and used by local agricultural communities	Monte Calvario, Auronzo (47): a late (2 nd c BC- Imperial period) cult place high up in the Cadore mountains dedicated to the cult of fertility/healing and water (springs)
Montegrotto Terme (10): a thermal lake sanctuary and second earliest attested Venetic cult place, established in the 8 th century BC		Presette - Prà della Stalla (37): a minor rural votive deposit (5 th c BC) in the vicinity of Col Castelir	

		Cave of Bocca Lorenza (34): a cave located on Monte Summano in Santorso In the NW piedmont. A Neolithic dwelling, Eneolithic burial place and subsequently a place of offerings from the 5th c BC to the late medieval period	
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The fieldwork I carried out at five ambiguous, complex or non-cult locations in section E of chapter 5: Mt Piai (41), an archaeologically significant yet complex site not far from Mt Altare; Pian dell'Agnella on Mt Dolada (43) a high altitude, secluded mountain housing one Venetic and one Roman cemetery; the hillside cemetery of Montebelluna Via Cima Mandria (29); the stipi of Padua in summary (Ex-Pilsen, Piazza Garibaldi, Pozzo Dipinto; San Daniele, see fig. 3.2); Este Benvenuti (8).



Figure 3.2. The votive deposits of Padua. Adapted and scanned from Tuttocittà

3.4. The fieldwork form

In this section I will describe and discuss each field of my fieldwork form (see appendix 2).

The search for consistency and the need for comparability led me to devise a form that is the same for all sites and includes the anomalous ones and the cemetery sites I have decided to include in my fieldwork as "counterparts" to the votive deposits, in order to compare and contrast the positioning, context and treatment of locales used for funerary and cult activity.

Therefore, regardless of the type of site to hand I have asked the same questions and applied the same criteria to all locales at all times. The fields that were not applicable to some sites (for instance the questions regarding the steepness or accessibility of hills) I left blank.

Location: In this field I record the geographical location of the site and its position in the region: that is to say whether it's situated in the North, South, East or West and whether it is in the plains, in the mountains, piedmont or lagoon milieu.

I chose to include this field as it allows a clear positioning of the locale in question and to allow a cross-regional comparison between different milieus and at different scales, i.e. as part of a cluster of sacred sites in a geographically-restricted area.

I reached each chosen location on foot whenever feasible, leaving the car as far back as possible. I then identified the most intuitive mode of approach or way of access to the site location.

I used modern maps to aid navigation through the landscape and to the sites, to orientate in relation to contemporary sites, but I mostly relied on my own vision and sense of direction to explore the landscape and identify archaeologically significant landmarks in the landscape surrounding each site.

I also sometimes attempted to explore rural places without the aid of the two-dimensional map, in order to get a more spontaneous feel for a place and come across 'unannounced' vistas and landmarks. In David Lowenthal's words, "the context of interaction between man [sic] and milieu depends (...) on mood and circumstance, weather and light and time of day, views from on foot or in a vehicle, stationary or in motion, deliberately chosen or accidentally come upon" (Lowenthal 1978: 385 quoted in Craik 1986: 56).

Modern visible features: in this field I thoroughly describe the visible terrain in its present condition, recording vegetation, geological features, water courses, modern buildings and constructions or superstructures such as roads, paths, motorways and rail tracks. I describe the location first at a general settings (landscape) level and subsequently in depth, at site level.

The descriptive information is backed up by a photographic record of the site visit with a record of day, time and weather and visibility conditions.

I comment on the terrain features that would be likely or have been proven to be in place during the period in which votive dedications, burials, habitation or any other human activity or presence affected (occurred at) the site in question.

The landscape assessment in descriptive form concerns the visible landforms, present terrain conditions, modern vegetation cover and morphology of place as opposed to any known data about past land morphology, palaeo-hydrography and such.

I chose to include this descriptive field as the basis for an assessment of the modern landscape in terms of terrain change, environmental change and geographical cross-assessment. By making a permanent record of the present conditions of a site I am able to compare it with other locations. The forms could then be consulted, say, every 5 years: another merit of the present study is that of monitoring the condition of an archaeological landscape at a given point in time, and as such could be of interest to cultural heritage managers as well as archaeologists.

Extent of prominence / seclusion: in this field I record the extent of "visibility" or "concealment" of a site, or my interpretation of it for want of hard environmental data pertaining to the physical features of the landscape at the time of use that identifies each location (settlement, shrine etc.).

I therefore make a note of whether the location lies on or in the proximity of a height such as a mountain, hill, promontory or whether it was likely to have been inconspicuous, such as for instance locations surrounded or concealed by trees or other more visible terrain features.

The isolation of a site had an impact on its visibility and/or seclusion. A site such as a cave, albeit hidden from view and only approachable by means of entering a secluded, enclosed space might have nonetheless been conspicuous in the surrounding terrain; the same applies to a hill situated among or near other hills, where it stands out from the otherwise homogeneous scenery by unique features such as shape, associated features (e.g. water) and stories/place memories.

Relationship to surrounding landscape (i.e. blends in, contrasts): this field describes whether a locale blends in or appears in stark contrast to its surrounding.

Distance from other contemporaneous or earlier votive deposits (if applicable): this field is the first of three that record the actual distance of the given location from other sites (votive deposits in this instance). It records whether the site in question could have been spatially linked in any way to others, e.g. positioned along transport routes, access routes into settlements, transhumance tracks, or at strategic points along a possible boundary or whether the locale to hand was not likely to be connected with other sites. This piece of information might tell me whether the site was likely to be part of a symbolic network of shrines, a stop-over in trade or agricultural routes or pilgrimage ways or rather a free-standing locale connected with a specific community or outstanding natural feature(s).

Distance from contemporaneous or earlier settlement sites: I record the approximate distance of the site from known contemporaneous or earlier settlement nuclei. This could tell me if there was a shift or change in territorial use of the location and its surroundings through time, e.g. a shift in function. It could also ascertain whether intense periods of site use (based on artefact dating) coincided or overlapped with contemporaneous habitation patterns in the area. Also, the distance from settlements could indicate how viable it would have been for local settlers to reach and use the site.

Distance from contemporaneous or earlier cemeteries: I record the distance from known cemeteries or burial sites in the area, if applicable. This could shed light on the spatial and ideological relationships between cult places and burial places. I would compare this datum across my sample and then across the entire Venetic site dataset to identify patterns of positioning of cult places in relation to mortuary places.

Seasonality factor: I visited most of the sites twice, once in winter and once in summer, to experience place in different seasons and under different weather conditions. Specifically, I included this field in the form to establish whether the site would be visible and/or accessible in all seasons, i.e. whether people could get there when the site was snowbound in winter. I hope this datum will show whether there was a likely seasonal use of the site vs. year-round use of certain locations, or whether seasons and changes in the appearance of some sites (e.g. frozen water) could have impacted on people's perception of them.

Timing of climb/ extent of tiredness/timing of visualisation of the peak (if applicable): this records whether one can easily reach a prominent location and long it takes to do so; it

also records how far along the hill or mountain slope(s) the peak(s) become(s) visible. In those instances where the hill or mountain top was likely to be selected as the concentration of cult or other activity, these factors could determine how easy, long or difficult the climb was (bearing in mind basic differences in age, gender, degree of physical fitness, health, build and stature). The timing of visualisation and timing of concealment of the top could impact on the visitor's experience in approaching the sacred place/place of gathering/the end of their journey.

Phenomenological considerations: in this field I record my impressions and my sensory experience of place. For each site I specified how long I spent there, and in what weather conditions.

I describe what it feels like to be at that particular location at that particular point in time and what factors make the experience significant to me, but also what elements could potentially represent a distraction. The point of this exercise, allowing for changes to the physical environment and personal experience that affect and shape sense of place, is to provide an embodied account and place-specific sensual description and interpretation of a location, an account of the experience of identifying a locale in its surrounding topography, familiarising oneself with the terrain, negotiating it, looking at it from afar and from up-close, finally reaching it, exploring it and leaving it: being there, in other words.

Visibility from / of the site: In this field, related to the above field (prominence vs. seclusion) I record the extent of visibility of the site from afar and from up close, and the ease of reaching the location to reconstruct landscape or landmark awareness.

I assess the extent of visibility as one nears the location, and the points of visibility or concealment in the surrounding scenery. I record the most visible features, whether by size, colour or shape. This is particularly useful in case of heights and hilltop locations, as it gives one the sense of approaching a locale and the extent of visibility a site could have had and its visual impact on the pilgrim or worshipper heading that way.

I chose to include this field because I believe the extent of visibility of a location might have borne a significant weight on the way it was perceived and even established, i.e. whether it was a prominent or secluded location (see above field).

Intervisibility with nearby stipi (if applicable): this field assesses the intervisibility between the specific locale and other locales with traces of cult activity and votive depositions

Interpretation: this field is where I recorded my initial interpretation of the place and whether or not being there, actually reaching and exploring the site in its settings added or changed my impressions and understanding of the site's significance and character. I make preliminary inferences about its significance, possible cult features, function and patterns of use.

GIS points: I record the points where I geo-reference the site with my GPS apparatus. I make a note of the points on maps and sketches of the site. The precise positioning offered by GPS recordings facilitates landscape navigation and informs the phenomenological exercise in that I precisely pin down the location where my field experiences and observations took place.

3.4.2 Fieldwork analysis

After visiting the sites and filling out the assessment form I compared and contrasted the data in my possession to identify any patterns and significant common points in relation to cult practices, adding to existing analyses on the basis of the votive objects pertaining to each site.

The more I visited these sites and surveyed their territory the more it became clear that certain criteria determined the selection and treatment of votive deposits/ cult sites; these sites fitted local, place-specific landscape morphologies and conformed to ideological as well as practical demands.

After walking the fields and modern towns and exploring their topography I appreciated that it is easy to form biased judgements, assumptions or generalisations regarding the character and context of ritual sites in relation to their broader geographical milieus.

Instead, these aspects pertaining to site location and character are proving unpredictable and tend to escape rigid categorisations, as I will argue below.

3.4.3 GIS

The use of GIS for the graphic representation and analysis of the territory in its entirety, and the highlighting of the sacred locations in questions allowed me to answer questions that would not have been feasible without the intensive fieldwork analysis at each and every site.

GIS representation and its inbuilt tools of basic query and analysis enabled me to provide a broader scope to my investigation and to ask targeted questions of all forty-three sites comprising my database. For instance, I tackled the following overarching issues and attempted interpretations based on GIS.

At a preliminary level the GIS software allowed me to import the geo-referenced coordinates of the location of the votive deposits I had managed to identify, while GoogleEarth allowed me to pin down more or less precisely the positioning of those sites I has not visited and georeferenced; I then plotted them all on multi-layer maps of the region Veneto. I used a 1:5,000 scale map for two particular study areas (i.e. the shrines of the piedmont and the votive deposits of Este) and others at the same scale for the territory of Calalzo di Cadore and the Belluno valley. I obtained the 1:5,000 vector digital map data for the Southern and Northern areas courtesy of the Regione Veneto, and the maps at the 1:5,000 of the North-eastern Veneto (Vittorio Veneto and environs) thanks to the Comune di Vittorio Veneto.

I selected two in-depth case studies to show the differences in landscape features and spatial occurrence of votive deposits at an urban site (Este) and in a rural context (the piedmont).

With the spatial representation thus obtained I was able to identify the topographical settings in which sacred sites occurred as opposed to settlements and burials, and in particular I observed and assessed the spatial relationship between cult sites and other ritual locales such as cemeteries, some of which I georeferenced as well.

Moreover, the viewshed tool gave me the likely visibility of sites (to and from each other) and I may be able to infer the likely accessibility of sites as well.

I focussed on the inter-visibility issues in the piedmont study area where I mapped out and compared the locations of the deposits of Castello Roganzuolo (36) Presette (37), Monte Altare (40), Monte Piai (41), Villa di Villa (42), and Scomigo (39).

The use of GIS and GoogleEarth enabled me to address my data from a quantitative perspective to complement the qualitative assessment in the field and in post-fieldwork analysis.

3.5 The Venetic deities: a comparison, contrast and assessment

After presenting the in-depth assessment of selected locales in the fieldwork chapter (5), in the discussion chapter of my thesis (Chapter 6) I shall present an in-depth discussion of all known Venetic deities and assess their cult in a locational retrospective.

Many deities remain nameless and their cults must be inferred by information other than inscriptions, but in chapter 4 I will review all deities named and unnamed to find out whether their differential treatment can shed some light on the extent and local character of cults.

Up until now in Venetic studies there has been a thorough assessment of Venetic deities in their own right as single phenomena but not as much in a cross-regional

evaluation. The differential treatment and the varying extent of worship and dedications pertaining to the various deities is a particularly intriguing aspect of the study: some were extensively worshipped and attracted the dedication of many inscribed votive objects whereas some are totally anonymous and only ever represented in votive objects, if that.

3.6 The iconography of cult objects

In order to complement and strengthen my approach to the landscape settings of the sites I am also assessing the iconography of the votive objects from certain sites; specifically, I am interested in the representation of deities and/or places on the objects themselves.

The assessment of votives complements my landscape-based analysis in that it looks at the material evidence in its context.

3.7 Conclusion

I employ a multidisciplinary methodology and studied landscapes as well as deposited artefacts and artefacts within landscapes: in so doing I aim to establish whether and to what extent a particular locale, its landscape settings, the type of cult and the “character” of the deities worshipped were connected, and to study the various dimensions and scale of local material culture.

As stated in the thesis aim in the introduction chapter, I intend to bring to the fore the ways in which these aspects are interdependent: this sheds light on how the lived environment was characterised and structured, how people perceived and interacted with the landscape for different purposes and at different times.

Ultimately these findings should further the knowledge of the people-landscape relationships, and possibly shed new light on the dynamics behind the construction and development of social space.

This chapter has argued how my methodology and research aims provide a sustainable approach to the study of the relationship between landscape, cult and people, one that takes into account perceptual and sensory experience as well as topographic analyses: this overarching assessment tests the feasibility and the utility of landscape-driven analyses of sacred sites and the applicability of a phenomenological approach to place, and contributes to the knowledge of the Venetic peoples by taking a novel stance to their material culture.

In the following chapter I will provide an overview of Venetic sacred places and in chapter 5A- 5E I shall provide an in-depth account of the fieldwork carried out at the twenty selected locations.

Chapter 4: Votive deposits of the Iron Age in the Veneto

4.1 Introduction

Having detailed how I collected data and formulated a research methodology in chapter 3, this chapter analyses the data, provides an overview of Venetic votive deposits in the Iron Age and illustrates the main issues and problems associated with their study and interpretation.

Cult places and their contexts offer a potential insight into the social structure and cultural framework of the people who established them, particularly into the way they perceived the sacred sphere of their lives, which can be understood by an analysis of what objects were dedicated to the deities and by whom, where these objects were dedicated and how they were treated before or after deposition: this thesis addresses the topographical aspect of this relationship (the 'where'), and aims to show that the location and settings of shrines and votive depositions often reflect selective decisions by the individuals and community who perform such acts and may express aspects of their cultural identity as a whole.

Traditionally, votive deposits have been studied and classified by votive typologies and quantities, not by their topographical context or location (Pascucci 1990: 41 *ff.*). This approach has hindered the overall understanding of the significance of Venetic cult places and landscape.

In this chapter, I take a stance that has not been adopted before. I present the various cult places of the Veneto in their specific and broader geographical settings, first in the broader landscape context of the Veneto and in relation to the diverse morphological milieus in which they occur, and secondly in relation to other cultural sites such as settlements and cemeteries. I will argue that the planning of settlement space and the landscape settings of the location where an urban site was established are just as significant as the criteria behind the establishment of a votive deposit or a shrine. Even in the case of Este in the Po plain, we can argue that the river Adige played an important part in the birth and prosperity of the shrines; the river may have acquired its significance in relation to the settlement and vice versa. However, this is only one interpretation of the setting-specific significance of the river and the related sites; moreover, in the case of a river in an open and rural landscape, a particular locale, not necessarily the river as a whole, would have been worshipped for rationales that can, and should be, reconstructed.

This chapter outlines the whole dataset of the votive deposits in sections 4.3 to 4.6, grouped into sub-sections. After discussing their nature, extent and chronology, I will illustrate their general landscape or topographical context in order to “set the scene” and subsequently assess their inter-relationship and political significance, their connection with settlements and with burial places. I chose to order the sections this way to provide an overview from a wider scope to the specific and particular (from political or boundary sacred places to the ambiguous and special association of sacred places and cemeteries).

Site ID	Well known locations	Sufficiently known	Little Known	Unknown
1	X			
2			X	
3	X			
4		X		
5			X	
6	X			
7		X		
8		X		
9				X
10		X		
11		X		
12		X		
13		X		
14			X	
15			X	
16			X	
17			X	
18			X	
19			X	
20	X			
21			X	
22			X	
23				X
24				X
25				X
26	X			
27		X		
28				X
29	X			
30				X
31	X			
32		X		
33			X	
34			X	
35				X
36		X		
37			X	
38			X	
39			X	
40		X		
41			X	

42	X			
43		X		
44				X
45	X			
46		X		
47	X			
48				X
49	X			
50	X			
Total	12	13	16	9
which Votive deposits	10	11	16	9

Table 4.1. Extent of accuracy pertaining to the location of Venetic cult places and cemeteries.

4.1.1 The distribution of votive deposits in the region

Evidence for earlier forms of cult dating to the Bronze Age exists at at least two sites: in Altino La Fornace as a small feature (26) and at Monte Altare (40) in the form of pits containing high concentrations of pottery fragments not pertaining to a refuse, discard or habitation context (Arnosti 1993: 58 ff.).

The overall distribution of cult places in the region appears to reflect the variety of Venetic landscapes and sceneries, with a varied ratio of occurrence, variations in topographical location and votive offering patterns that make their study even more challenging. As one can see from fig. 4.1 on page 119, the spatial distribution of cult places in the Iron Age seems quantitatively greater in the Southwest and Northeast sectors of the land.

The under-representation of cult places in the north-western and eastern part of the Veneto could be due to preservation biases, but more probably to a generally relatively minor occurrence of cult places in those areas. The great concentration of cult places with an urban and extra-urban character in the Este and Padua areas bears witness to the importance attached to religion and cult by the inhabitants of the proto-urban centres and those living in the neighbouring suburban areas.

The relatively lesser occurrence of shrines and votive deposits in the eastern section of the Veneto (the Adriatic side) could well reflect a relatively recent archaeological interest in those areas compared to Este and its environs, rather than a differential or lesser cult activity in this part of the region. However, the recent discoveries of the sanctuary of Altino La Fornace, 26 (see below) and Lova (1) witness the existence of highly organised cult places in the lagoon-marshy milieu and near the sea.

The Northeastern sector of the Veneto, the piedmont stretching towards the Prealpi of the Alpi and the Alps of the Cadore, yielded a considerable number of sacred sites that appear to reflect their topographic settings as well as the interests and identities of local communities. The sacred sites in the piedmont (possibly positioned along a processional or pilgrimage route) were predominantly situated in prominent places, and the Alpine sites were established along important communication routes and close to significant natural elements such as springs (Lagole di Calalzo (45) and possibly Monte Calvario, 47).

The presence or absence of Venetic cult places in the north-western area is still a debated matter. Vicenza itself was an urban centre from the 6th century BC and had its own urban shrine (see below), whereas centres in the area north and west of Vicenza are thought to belong to a Venetic- Raetic cultural milieu: Magrè di Schio (32), Santorso (33), and Trissino (35) on the Colli Berici north of Vicenza.

4.1.2 The variety and individuality of each site

The peculiarity of Venetic cult places lies in the fact that many, if not most of them, are highly individual in character. The nature of each cult place, the context in which it occurs in relation to neighbouring sites or the local topography, the nature of the gifts that were offered to the deity, the nature of the rituals performed and their agents tend to vary substantially even in a geographically limited area.

The search for patterns in the published data, in the data I have collected in the field, and the impressions gathered by an overarching comparison, are increasingly telling me that the Venetic communities establishing and frequenting these cult places imprinted their individuality, their way of life and their place-specific social and economic concerns on the offerings and rites they performed at the various sacred sites.

Chapter 5C on the piedmont votive deposits in particular will illustrate how often notable variations occur at a local level in a geographically restricted area, bearing witness to the needs and perceptions of neighbouring agricultural communities. The variety of ritual expressions in itself can shed light on the various groups and even on the territorial organisation of rural communities in an area where large scale and substantial evidence of settlements is patchy, if not absent altogether.

4.1.3 The difficulty of identifying precise site locations

As I argued in the previous chapter, the study of Venetic cult places is often based on data from early excavations, unsystematic field walking reports and chance surface finds.

Without unnecessary repetitions, since the problem of identifying sites and their locations has been exhaustively dealt with, I shall simply stress the difficulty of pinning

down the exact geographical location of many of these cult places because indications are often vague and inconsistent. See table 4.1 above for a detailed breakdown of the extent of accuracy in locating individual sites.

The best example of this confusion in topographical terms is the Montegrotto Terme shrine (10), for which no less than three different likely locations are quoted in the literature; precise geographical positioning is omitted on most museum information panels, such as the Lova di Campagnalupia and Belluno museums.

Extensive survey has not been undertaken in the Veneto to establish spatial recognition or identification of Iron Age sacred sites; the typical way sites have been discovered is field walking, often carried out by members of local archaeological societies. Please refer to table 1 again for the weight of evidence pertaining to individual sites.

As can be seen in the table, I must rely on what (albeit scarce) information exists on the location of sites in the literature and then corroborate these data in the field with the aid of maps and geographical positioning devices (see previous chapters for references to site georeferencing).

Many deposits are still identified by objects now displayed in a museum and identified by vague provenance indications such as 'from the environs of...' which makes it impossible to pin down the precise location of many votive objects and rules out the possibility of establishing whether they were chance finds or part of a votive deposit in its own right.

4.1.4 Work in progress: Este Meggiaro, Villa di Villa, Monte Calvario and Altino La Fornace

Luckily, recent excavations are reversing this trend and providing stratigraphically reliable information on several sites: Este Meggiaro (6), Altino La Fornace (26), Villa di Villa in Cordignano (42), and Monte Calvario (47) in Auronzo.

The difference modern systematic excavation is making to the study of Venetic studies is clearly remarkable: thanks to recent data, we have much more information on deposits and structures found in situ and stratigraphically positioned artefacts. Recent work is shedding new light upon the character of Venetic cult in four geographical milieus of the ancient Veneto: the suburban Este territory (6), the Adriatic lagoon (26), the Treviso piedmont (42) and the alpine context of the Cadore (47).

The fact that excavation yielded structural remains at three out of the four recently investigated locations may suggest that the perceived lack of structural evidence at many sites in the past was due to unsystematic excavation methods or an overlooking of evidence in the archaeological process. It remains an open question as to how many other sites could

have yielded more substantial evidence pertaining to perishable or non-perishable structures or features had they been thoroughly excavated using modern techniques.

Recent excavations reveal that some cult places were organised in distinct ritual areas serving different purposes, such as the performance of sacrifice, the disposal or consumption of animal carcasses, the display of offerings and the periodic disposal of votive objects to make room for new ones (Ruta Serafini 2002, Gambacurta 2002, Tirelli 2002, Gangemi 2003, Leonardi forthcoming). Undoubtedly one of the most significant discoveries of the last ten years was the possible early start of human interaction with the location of the Iron Age shrine of Altino La Fornace (26), still unpublished (Museo di Altino information panel).

4.2 The chronology of sacred sites

The gap between Bronze Age ritual depositions in wet places -and in one case possibly of interment of pottery: see Monte Altare (40) below- and the start of votive depositions on dry land (but see Altichiero, 20, below) occurred between the 11th and 8th centuries BC. The one site bridging the chronological gap could be Altino La Fornace (26) mentioned above, a one-off in the region.

Elsewhere, the intervening period (from the 11th to the 8th centuries BC) sees sporadic offerings of bronze weaponry and personal ornaments such as rings and fibulae (depositions in the river Sile near Treviso).

During the Early Iron Age, river depositions became increasingly rare around the same time that votive assemblages began to occur near other water sources such as springs and lake basins (Bianchin Citton & Malnati 2001, 198 ff.). The notable exceptions are Altichiero (20) and Montereale Valcellina (38).

As we have seen, the earliest attested Venetic cult places are Altino La Fornace (26) and the lakeside shrine of Montegrotto Terme (10), formerly San Pietro Montagnon.

The late 6th and 5th centuries BC marked a significant time for Venetic society: the rise of so many cult places, ranging from self contained urban sanctuaries to rural votive deposits near significant natural features leads me to wonder what brought about the urge for formalised and often large scale votive depositions. The focus of these later stipi was either in or around sacred places in nature or in association with settlement sites and living communities.

The shift from individual acts of offering, suggested by the individual or small-scale deposition of personal items in rivers, to larger quantities of more 'humble' objects in the stipi proper suggests a move from elite dedications to a broader, less exclusive participation

of local communities in cult activities and more widespread presence at sacred sites. This "enlarged participation" may be reflected in dedications that some interpret as "community-oriented" at specific shrines: Vicenza (31), Lagole (45) and Monte Calvario (47) (Gangemi 2003b, 89; Gangemi 2003c, 102), although the basis for such interpretation is debated (Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006).

It could be inferred that by the 6th century BC, many Venetic groups and communities had reached a considerable extent of stability and reinforced their identity, self-sufficiency and social organisation: therefore, they required more organised cult practices to reflect their status and needs, and also, in my opinion, to reinforce their identities in light of increasing cultural contact and, ultimately, to face the process of Romanisation (see below). In addition, votive practices elsewhere in Italy could have stimulated the establishment of more formalised and permanent forms and locations of cult practices.

Many shrines during the 4th century BC (late Iron Age) in situations where the influence of the La Tène culture and Greek groups in the Po plain and the Adriatic could be significant factors for their surging and thriving lives.

The late shrines witness a lingering sense of Venetic identity and indigenous values in the often-destabilising process of Romanisation, despite the commonly held argument that this integration process happened relatively smoothly in the Veneto (Capuis 1999, 168 *ff.*).

The continuity of local cults into the Roman period is witnessed at many shrines and deposits that have a lifetime of up to nine centuries and go on well into the Imperial period.

The overall chronology of cult places reflects the rise of population centres and the flourishing of nearby settlement sites or at any rate the development of the local communities that founded them. However, the lifespan of shrines does not depend on their size, location or relationship with specific settlements: we have long lasting smaller deposits in the rural areas of the piedmont (Monte Altare, 40, and Villa di Villa, 42)) alongside major 'en route' sanctuaries in the Alps (Lagole, 45) and the main suburban Atestine shrines such as Baratella (3). Lastly, the monumentalisation or alteration of place does not have a bearing on site longevity anywhere in the region.

4.2.1 The earliest deposit: Altino La Fornace (26)

Following recent discoveries (1996-2006), it seems as if the lagoon votive deposit/shrine of Altino La Fornace (26) has replaced Montegrotto Terme (10) as the earliest cult place with a lifespan from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age (other local Bronze Age cult sites such as Pila del Brancón and Corte Lazise do not seem to have been subsequently inhabited in the Iron Age); it started attracting 'ritual' activity in the 11th and 10th centuries BC: if the current

interpretation of a feature as related to cult rather than occupation purposes is correct (Museo di Altino information panel), the transition from the Bronze to Iron Ages at this site could be marked by the early start of site use and reveal a wish by lagoon dwellers to 'single out' this place of worship at a time when Venetic centres were not yet fully developed and the regional identities of several communities were still taking shape.

The second cult place in chronological order is Montegrotto Terme (10), established as a lakeside shrine in the 8th century BC. We could attribute the impetus for the creation of this cult place to the progressive nucleation of nearby Este and Padua and the specific needs of the local population; the need for communal or large scale sacred places had not been a feature of the Bronze Age communities belonging to the Frattesina/ Montagnana milieus in the same area as Montegrotto Terme.

4.2.2 Late and anomalous deposits

How did 'sacred' sites evolve through time? Did the passing of time influence the nature, extent and situatedness ingrained in the act of offering gifts to the gods? Did the priorities of the local communities change; did their sense of identity alter through contacts with the Etruscans, the peoples beyond the Alps, the Greeks in the Po plain, and the process of Romanisation? Material culture studies show that votive types were influenced by foreign imports and contacts to a certain extent, often resulting in the absorption and adaptation of allogeous fashions (in weaponry, personal ornaments, pottery styles and so forth).

In terms of Venetic votive deposits, however, it is not entirely clear how their settings, morphology and context changed through contact with other cultures from the 3rd century onwards. To an extent there did seem to be a change in terms of the structure and character of the deposits per se, leading to the construction of sanctuary features built in non-perishable materials. However, the sites that have yielded such structural remains are the most recently excavated ones and the survival of structures and features could be due to differential excavation techniques. In addition, it is never clear-cut whether these structures pertained to the Roman period proper or to the grey area of Romanisation (see Villa di Villa and Monte Calvario).

The latest stipi are the one at Lova di Campagnalupia (1) on the Adriatic lagoon and the one on Monte Calvario in Auronzo di Cadore (47) in the Alps: both sites were established during the Romanisation phase in the 2nd century BC.

The deposit at Casale Scolo di Lozzo in Este (5) was identified by a quantity of Roman materials and a Venetic inscribed drinking cup dating to the late 7th- early 6th centuries BC and a few other undated inscriptions (Maggiani 2002: 71; Whitehouse pers. comm.). It is debated whether it can be interpreted as a Venetic votive deposit at all,

despite the fact that the site started as a small scale deposition spot (Pascucci 1990, Baggio Bernardoni 2002), maybe in the form of a sporadic rather than a regular worship location. According to research by Balista and Rinaldi, it was situated near an ancient branch of the river Adige (Canale di Lozzo) and was part of Este's settlement pattern (Balista and Rinaldi 2002: 24). It is often left out of Venetic deposit discussions due to its meagre and inconsistent artefact chronology, but the presence of a Roman temple to the Dioscuri twins in the 2nd century AD makes me think the location was already meaningful in later prehistory.

A further example of an "anomalous" site is Monte Piai (41) near Monte Altare (40) in the Vittorio Veneto area. It yielded a scatter of special finds ranging from local 5th century BC pottery and Certosa-type fibula rings (Iron Age) to Late Roman arrowheads. I will illustrate my fieldwork at this site in chapter 5E.

Name	ID number	Milieu	Landscape Features	Chronology	Cult elements
Lova	1	Lagoon	River, lagoon	3 rd BC	Water, liminal?
Este Morlungo	2	Plain	River	***	Liminal, fertility
Este Baratella	3	Plain	River	7 th BC- Roman	Writing, liminal, fertility
Este Canevedo	4	Plain	Plain	?	NA
Este Casale	5	Plain	River	7 th BC? - Roman	Healing?
Este Meggiaro	6	Plain	Marshy	6 th BC	Status, fertility
Este Caldevigo	7	Plain	Hill	5 th BC	Status
Este Benvenuti	8	Plain	Hill	6 th -4 th BC	NA
Abano Terme	9	Plain	River	4 th - 3 rd BC	Water, drinking
Montegrotto	10	Plain	Lake, Springs	8 th BC- AD	Water, drinking, healing
Ex-Pilsen A	11	Plain	Domestic unit	5 th - 4 th BC	Domestic cult?
Ex-Pilsen B	12	Plain	NA	5 th - 4 th BC	Domestic cult?
Piazza Castello	13	Plain	NA	6 th - 5 th BC	Domestic cult?
Piazza Cavour	14	Plain	NA	DK	Domestic cult?
Piazza Garibaldi	15	Plain	NA	6 th BC?	Domestic cult?
Via Rialto	16	Plain	NA	5 th - 4 th BC	Domestic cult?
Via Battisti	17	Plain	NA	4 th BC	Domestic cult?
Pozzo Dipinto	18	Plain	River	4 th BC- AD	Water, status?
S. Daniele	19	Plain	River	5 th - 4 th BC	Water, status?
Altichiero	20	Plain	River	6 th BC- AD	Water, status
Mortise	21	Plain	Rural	5 th - 4 th BC	Status
Mandriola	22	Plain	Rural	5 th - 4 th BC	Status?
Bertipaglia	23	Plain	Rural	5 th - 4 th BC	Status?
Camin	24	Plain	Marshy, woodland	4 th - 3 rd BC	Status?
Musile	25	Plain, lagoon	River?	6 th BC?	Lady of the animals
Alt La Fornace	26	Lagoon	River, canals	11 th -10 th BC?- 5 th AD	Emporic, water, liminality, status?
Altino Canevere	27	Lagoon	River	5 th BC?	Water, liminality?
Asolo	28	Piedmont	NA	DK	DK, Status?
Montebelluna Cima Mandria	29	Piedmont	Hill	5 th BC- 1 st AD	NA
Fossalta di Portogruaro	30	Lagoon, plain	NA	5 th BC	DK
Vicenza	31	Piedmont	River	5 th BC	Water
Magrè	32	Piedmont	Hill	5 th - 2 nd BC	Liminal?, oracle
Santorso	33	Piedmont	Hill	3 rd - 2 nd BC?	Liminal?, oracle
Cave of Bocca Lorenza	34	Piedmont	Cave, High place	5 th BC- AD	Liminal, oracle?
Trissino	35	Piedmont	Hill	3 rd BC	Liminal?, oracle
Castello Roganzuolo	36	Piedmont	Hill	5 th - 4 th BC	Agricultural, fertility, status?
Presette	37	Piedmont	Plain, rural	5 th BC	Agricultural?
Montereale	38	Plain	River	11th- 7 th BC?	Status, water?

Valcellina					
Scomigo	39	Piedmont	Hill	6 th - 5 th BC	DK
Mt Altare	40	Piedmont	Hill, Springs	6 th BC- AD	Liminality, high place, fertility, oracle?
<i>Mt Piai</i>	41	<i>Piedmont</i>	<i>Hill</i>		<i>DK</i>
Villa di Villa	42	Piedmont	Hill, caves	4 th BC- AD	Fertility, high place, water?
<i>Mt Dolada</i>	43	<i>Mountain</i>	<i>Hill</i>	6 th BC- AD	<i>NA</i>
Vallesella di Domegge	44	Mountain	NA	DK	Status?
Lagole di Calalzo	45	Mountain	Springs	5 th BC- AD	Water, healing, status, liminality
Mt Nenz	46	Mountain	Hill	7 th BC?	Status, liminality, key?
Mt Calvario, Auronzo	47	Mountain	Hill	3 rd - 2 nd BC	Water?, community, status?
Valle di Cadore	48	Mountain	NA	NA	Status
<i>Mel di Cadore</i>	49	<i>Mountain</i>	<i>Hill</i>	6 th - 5 th BC	<i>NA</i>
<i>Mel tumuli</i>	50	<i>Mountain</i>	<i>Plain</i>	8 th BC- 5 th BC	<i>NA</i>
Total Piedmont	Total mountain	Total lagoon			
15	5	4			

Table 4.2. The landscape settings of votive deposits and cemeteries and their relationship with settlements. The items in italic font refer to non-cult locations

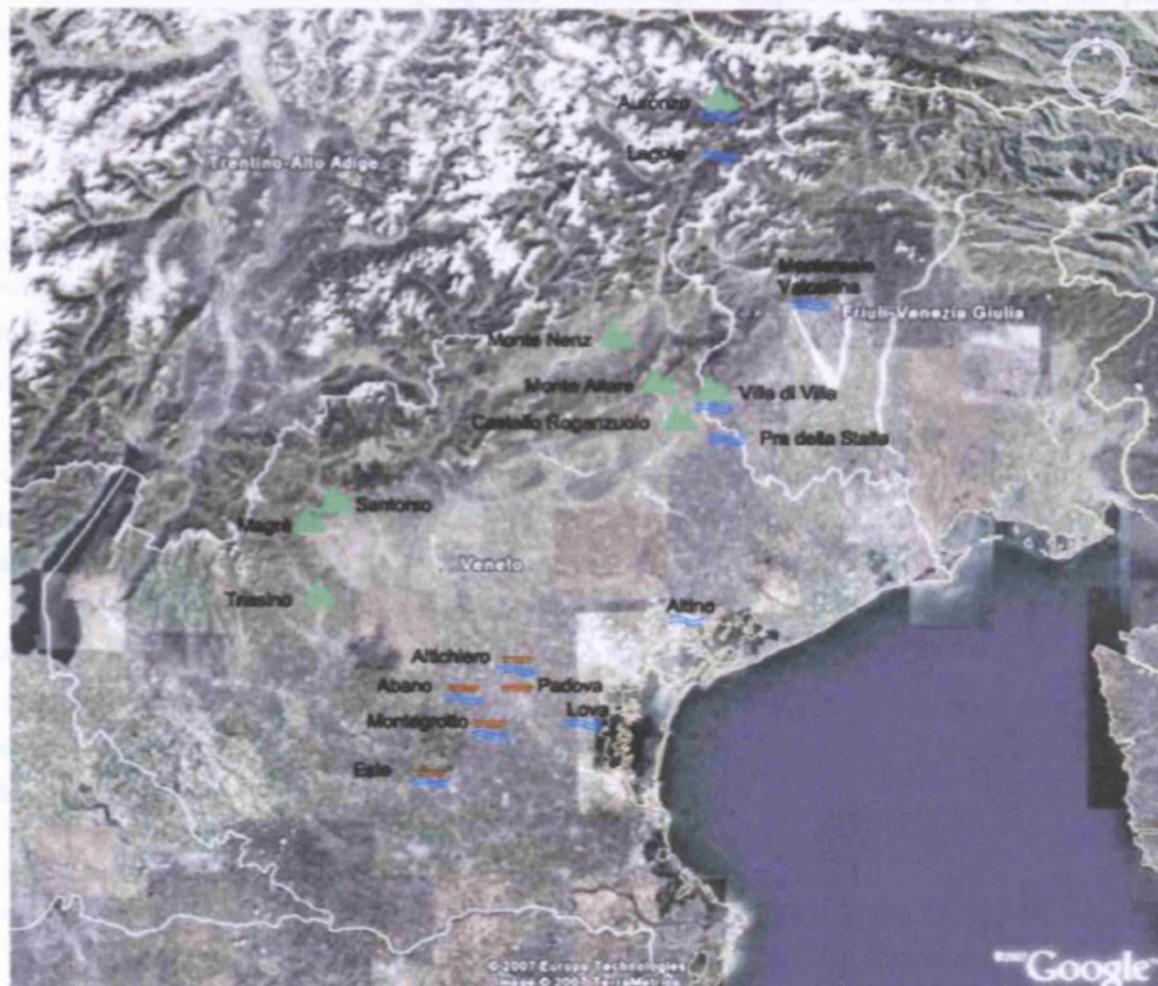
4.3 The topographical character and landscape settings of Venetic votive deposits

As we can see in table 2 above, the variety and expanse of the landscape of the Veneto and the various contexts in which votive deposits were established suggests that the local sacred sites adapted to, if not imitated the local topography. The milieus in which shrines and votive deposits occur should therefore be assessed at a local level and this need constitutes the *raison d'être* of the present thesis.

4.3.1 Prominent places

These sites (fig. 4.1) are: Caldevigo, Colle del Principe (7); Magrè (32); Santorso (33); Trissino (35); Castello Roganzuolo (36); Scomigo (39); Monte Altare (40); Col Castelir in Villa di Villa (42) and Monte Calvario (47).

Prominent locations for votive deposits include hills, hilltops, slopes and ridges.






-  Sites associated with hills or peaks
-  Sites in plain
-  Sites in watery context (springs, rivers, lagoon)

Figure 4.1. The 'prominent' or high places, spring sites, river, marshy and plain sites among votive deposits. Map adapted from GoogleEarth

The relationship between prominent sacred places and their landscape varies: for instance, Monte Altare (40) blends in with its surrounding hilly piedmont landscape context, whereas other hilltop/hill slope sacred places such as Colle del Principe in Caldevigo (7) stand out in an otherwise flat landscape. Some hills were not the immediately obvious choice of prominent location in their own local settings: for instance Col Castelir in Villa di Villa (42) is a low rounded dome in a landscape consisting of more peculiar or striking looking hills; Monte Altare (40) had a visually striking appearance and barren slopes which contrasted with the neighbouring hills but was lower than Monte Piai, 41 (briefly mentioned

above in section 4.2.2 on archaeologically anomalous sites) which however did not yield traces of "unmistakably cult" activity.

Places such as the Alpine site on Monte Nenz in Trichiana (46) are the exception in a local pattern of sacred places in non-prominent locations.

4.3.2 Spring sites

People have considered springs sacred, or at any rate special, throughout the millennia, and prehistoric and protohistoric Italy is no exception. The long-standing archaeological record of offerings and votive deposits linked with springs in Italy ranges from the Neolithic to modern times.

In Iron Age Veneto however we appreciate a slightly different pattern than in central and southern Italy, for instance. Although the possibility that springs were sacred and attracted worship is a very distinct possibility it is not always validated by archaeological evidence.

Sites associated with springs are (fig. 4.1): Montegrotto Terme (10), Lagole di Calalzo (45) and possibly Monte Altare (40) and Monte Calvario (47).

In the case of Montegrotto Terme, we are dealing with hot mineral springs feeding a thermal lake of considerable expanse (Dämmer 1986, 95 ff.). I will deal with this site in detail in the following sub-section (lakes).

4.3.3 Lakes

The only known Venetic votive deposit to have developed and focussed on or around a lake as a meaningful place in nature is Montegrotto Terme (10) in the Colli Euganei plain. The many offerings of horse statuettes at this deposit may reflect a statement of identity and status by the local aristocratic groups who relied on the horse as symbol of prestige or those whose livelihood depended on horse breeding; on the other hand, the animal may have represented a means to preserve wellbeing and wealth against adverse times.

The astounding number of miniature drinking vessels (see fig. 4.2) that were dedicated as votive gifts at the site seems to reveal another aspect of the cult (the drinking of holy water) and to represent the larger community, the majority of worshippers who wished to participate in the cult in a way they could afford or that was most relevant to them.

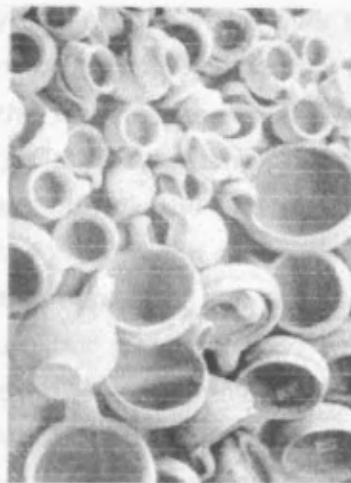


Figure 4.2. Drinking vessels found in Montegrotto (10). From Dämmer 1986.

The fact that the lake was situated roughly in between the settlement nuclei of Este and Padua has led many to believe it was a territorial shrine serving the therapeutic and healing beliefs of both communities as well as a stopover for travellers and merchants. I will also argue that the shrine of Montegrotto Terme (10) was possibly a striking independent landmark in the local territory in light of its perceived powerful healing power.

Another site that is today associated with a lake (Lago di Centro Cadore) and could have consisted of a lake in the Iron Age or Roman period is Lagole (45, see map D1).

4.3.4 Rivers

The existence of sacred rivers in the Venetic cultural area concerns eleven sites (see again fig. 4.1 above): Lova di Campagnalupia (1), Este Morlungo (2), Este Baratella (3), Abano Terme (9), Padua Pozzo Dipinto (18), Padua San Daniele (19), Altichiero (20), Altino La Fornace (26), Altino Canevere (27), Vicenza Piazzetta San Giacomo (31), and Montereale Valcellina in the Friuli region (38).

Lova di Campagnalupia (1) was a cult place situated in the marine environment of the Adriatic lagoon and near the mouth of the river Brenta. The Brenta (Meduacus) was anthropomorphised by the Romans and may have been worshipped as a river god in the late protohistoric -Romanisation phase too.

Este Morlungo (2) and Baratella (3) were linked to the settlement of Este and on the banks of the Adige before the *Rotta della Cucca* (the great Po flood in 589 AD, see Paul The Deacon⁴) diverted its course.

⁴ *Historia Longobardorum* Book III, 23

Another site with a likely connection with a river is Abano Terme (9), very close to Montegrotto Terme, with a chronology of 4th-3rd centuries BC; this small-scale votive deposit was located en route between the settlements of Este and Padua and associated with the river Adige (Pascucci 1990, 239). Its Roman name, Aponus, seems to me to be a link with the nearby *Fons Aponi* of Montegrotto Terme and, as such, a link with hot springs and healing rituals, still reflected in Abano's thriving spa industry (Amosti 1993: 76).

The suburban Paduan votive deposit of San Daniele (18) was supposedly part of the greater urban territory of Padua, but its occurrence near the bank of the river Brenta justifies its inclusion in this section. The chronology of its votives spans the late 5th- 4th centuries BC: these are a handful of bronzetti and some 30 miniature drinking shapes and bowls (Pascucci 1990, 171), which seems to link this votive deposit to the water element as well as the settlement per se.

The deposit of Pozzo Dipinto (19) was also linked to the settlement of Padua. It had the same chronological life span as the San Daniele deposit, but also yielded a few Roman objects among the array of artefacts, which have been interpreted as votives (Pascucci 1990, 52; 219).

The most unusual, a one-off in the archaeological record, is the votive deposit discovered at the bottom of the river Brenta in Altichiero (20), just North of Padua. This deposit consists of votive bronze objects, pottery and coins dating from the 6th century BC to the 4th century AD. Palaeo-hydrographical studies established that this particular stretch of the Brenta was in situ in the first millennium BC (Leonardi and Zaghetto 1993: 135 ff.). It is assumed in the literature that owing to the scarce attrition wear on the bronze artefacts dating to the Iron Age the deposit may have been located in the river itself rather than at an unknown location along its bank (Leonardi and Zaghetto 1993). Through my research I identified the precise find spot. The modern artificial bank is higher than the river but in antiquity the shore would have been level: the modern context of the river makes it difficult to reconstruct the original site context and why worshippers selected that particular location on a river bend to dedicate votive gifts to the deities.

The two cult places of Altino, La Fornace (26) and Canevere (27) were both located in the lagoon milieu and situated in the Cona marshes, in the proximity (27) and in the middle (26) of a network of canals, which are today the Santa Maria, Sioncello and river Zero.



Figure 4.3. 19th century map of Altino and the Cona marshes. From Tombolani and Scarfi 1987

The positioning of the urban shrine of Piazzetta San Giacomo in Vicenza (31) linked it to the sacred element of water: it was established in a watery milieu on the banks of the river Retrone and could have consisted of a perishable structure where the local community made offerings to the local deities. The presence of nail holes in numerous votive laminae suggests their hanging or attachment to a vertical surface of sorts.

Finally, I have included Montereale Valcellina (38) in this sub-section because it was an early river deposit with cult and geographical affiliations with the traditionally Venetic area (Malnati 1996).

4.3.5. Other rural locations

Almost 60% of the votive deposits considered in my thesis were located in rural locations with no clear link to settlement sites; one third of the overall number of votive deposits were not connected with surviving features that testify to their significance as freestanding sacred places in nature, although these could have existed during the lifetime of the votive deposits in question.

In the Treviso piedmont there were at least three votive deposits in the local countryside with no explicit link to local communities: Castello Roganzuolo (36), Scomigo (39), and Presette di Prà della Stalla (37).

At all three locations we find dedications of either votive laminae or bronzetti of the Upper Piave Valley type, even though the laminae found at Presette (37) belong to a strictly local typology with images of a human figure surrounded by cattle or depictions of cattle alone.

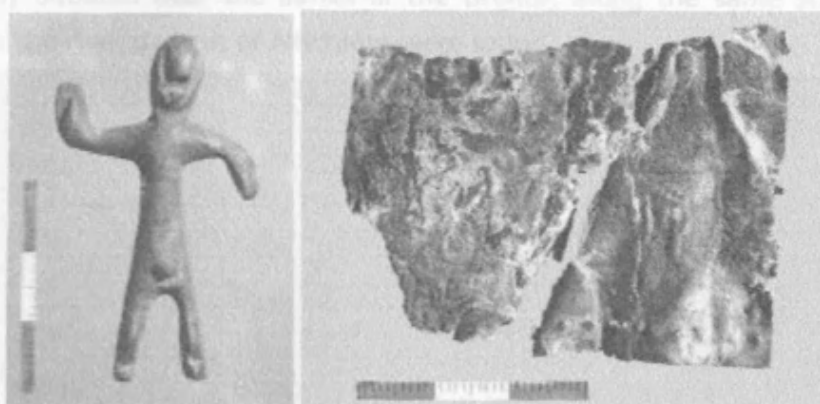


Figure 4.4. Bronzetto from Scomigo (39) and lamina from Presette (37). Courtesy of the GAC

Only at Castello Roganzuolo (36) (fig. 4.5), that I also mentioned in section 4.3.1 on prominent places, we can guess the location of the votive deposit with some certainty (possibly on top of a low hill), whereas the other sites have been documented and recorded on the sole basis of surface artefact scatters.

In the territory surrounding Padua there was a scatter of minor votive deposits that had little apparent likeness to the cults and votive objects one encounters in the major proto-urban site. These small-scale deposits, identified by the surface recovery of as few as three or four votives, all date to the 5th century BC based on relative artefact chronology and were likely to be located in easily accessible locations in the upper Po plain. The fact that they were discovered in the early days of Venetic archaeology means that I do not have a precise find spot to carry out fieldwork.



Figure 4.5. Castello Roganzuolo. Photograph by author

These are: Mortise (21), Mandriola (22), Bertipaglia (23), and Camin (24).

Mortise (21) was located near Altichiero (20) (fig. 4.6), 5 km northeast of modern Padua, possibly situated near the banks of the Brenta, along the same stretch where the materials from the river deposit of Altichiero were found.

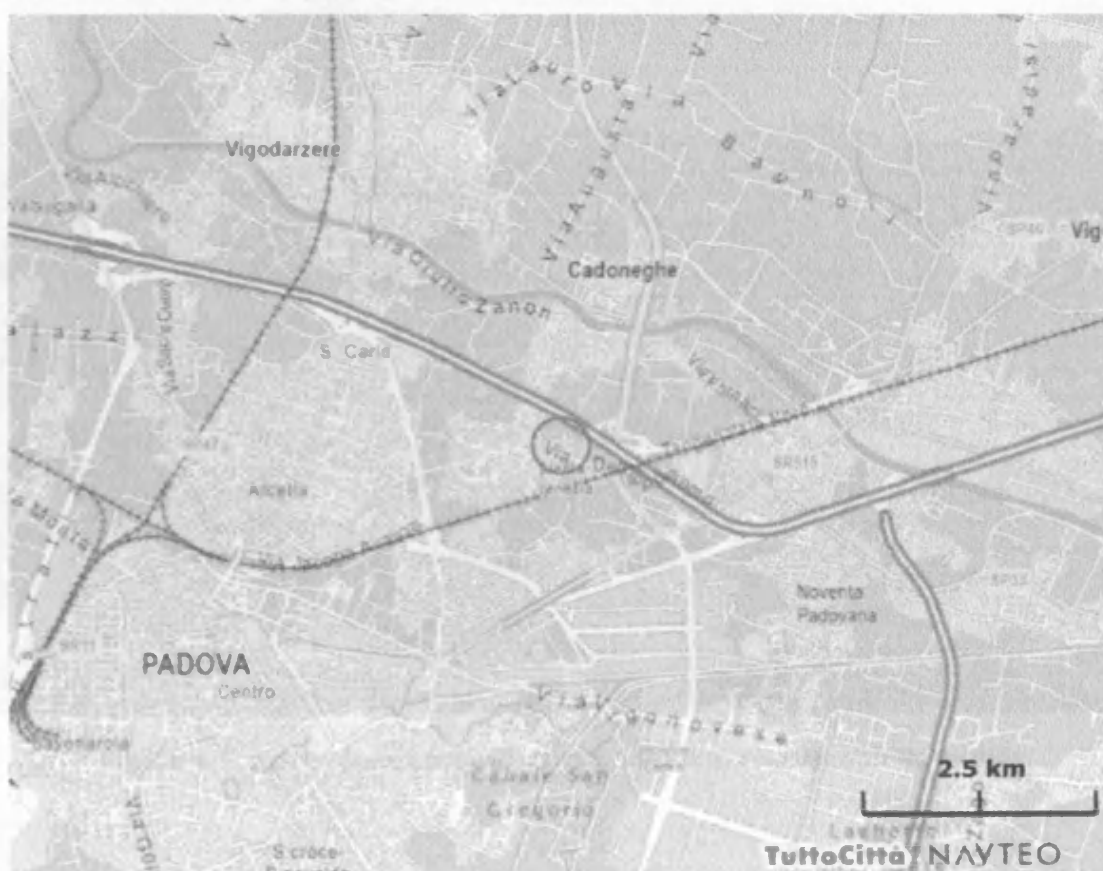


Figure 4.6. The location of Mortise, Via Baracchini, Padua (21)

Mandriola (22) was located en route to Abano Terme (9, Southeast) and along the route of the Roman Via Annia.

Camin (24) and Bertipaglia (23) were located respectively East and South of the ancient settlement: the milieu where Camin (24) was located was thickly wooded marsh in antiquity (<http://www.Padova.net>) but owing to the lack of precise topographical indications for the location of the votive objects I am unable to make any specific inferences.

The lagoon and greater Venetian area also yielded sites that can be interpreted as rural sacred places: the isolated deposits of Musile di Piave (25) and Fossalta di Portogruaro (30), but also Lova di Campagnalupia (1) for which no nearby settlement nuclei have been yet unearthed.

Finally, the North-western piedmont exclusively yielded sites with no association with settlements: the Venetic-Raetic cult places of Magrè (32), Santorso (33) and Trissino (35), and possibly the Neolithic cave dwelling and later votive deposit of Bocca Lorenza on Monte Summano (34) (fig. 4.7).



Figure 4.7. Monte Summano, Santorso, Vicenza. Photograph by author

4.4 Political and boundary shrines

Edlund described as "political" those shrines or cult places in pre-Roman Italy that served the interaction needs of more than one community and were meeting places for a number of social, economic and ritual purposes (Edlund 1987, 41 ff.).

I will argue the existence of ritual sites serving similar purposes in the Veneto: Monte Altare (40), Colle Castelir di Villa di Villa (42), Vallesella di Domegge (44), Lagole di Calalzo (45), Monte Nenz in Trichiana (46), but also the North-western cult places (32-35).

The position of such sites, which were not spatially close to specific settlements, suggests that they were located on boundaries between individual territories, or perhaps strategically located for the passage of people, of herds, for the transit of goods and the social interactions that followed, as well as locales devoted to the symbolic and actual exchange and interaction of customs and identities.

The very position of the Veneto in the geographical layout of Northern Italy makes it a boundary region between different cultural milieus in antiquity as well as today: close to the Friuli, Lombardy, Trentino and Austria today, and close to those societies traditionally defined as "San Zeno", "Raetic", Hallstatt, La Tène and Etruscan in prehistory, not to mention in contact with the Greek and Middle Eastern world; furthermore, the Etruscans settled the southern part of the Po plain and the Adriatic coast (Adria and Spina, Bosio et al. 1984) and various Celtic groups did make incursions in several parts of the region. The numerous artefacts of non-Venetic origin present at Venetic sanctuaries and cemeteries point to a lively trade and interaction with a number of cultural facies.

The presence of imported or foreign-style goods in burials may simply indicate trade or prestige goods on display, but the presence of foreign artefacts at votive deposits suggests an act of personal donation/dedication, and therefore the presence of non-Venetic peoples actually visiting those locations. Furthermore, the presence of votive deposits along important communication routes leading to neighbouring regions may be significant.

4.4.1 Cult places in North-western Veneto

The culture traditionally labelled "Raetic" developed in the Trentino Alto Adige in the Iron Age, following the Fritzens-San Zeno culture of the Bronze Age.

The Trentino lies to the North-West of the Veneto. The region yielded numerous votive deposits in high places and a few at special places such as caves and spring sites, all identified by artefact assemblages of ritual nature (Chieco Bianchi 1988).

There are a scatter of known votive deposits in the environs of the Colli Berici North of Vicenza in the Veneto that display characteristics of both the Venetic and the so-called

Raetic cultural facies: Magrè (32), Santorso (33), Bocca Lorenza (34) and Trissino (35) (fig. 4.8).



Figure 4.8. The Vicenza votive deposits. From GoogleEarth

Their position on hilltops or upper hill slopes suggests a cult of prominent places and the dedication of objects (antler *sortes*) pertaining to an oracular (mantic) cult.

Inscribed antlers in the Raetic script bear dedications to Reit-, Rit-, a local deity that could have connections with Atestine Reitia: this peculiarity indicates the complex character of this area and its cult practices bearing witness to local “multi-cultural” group identity (Pascucci 1990).

4.4.2 Vallesella di Domegge, Monte Nenz and the Upper Piave Valley

These two sites, located in the Alpi di Belluno highlands in Northeastern Veneto have been traditionally interpreted as foreign cult places in Venetic territory.

In terms of material culture, Vallesella di Domegge (44) yielded a discreet quantity of La Tène style weapons and armoury (famous is the Alpine Style helmet so called “di

Vallesella”), but the reports indicating its topographic location and find context are either unpublished or do not exist.

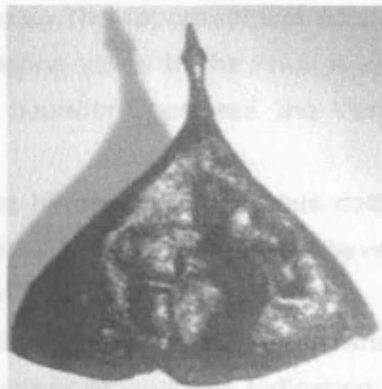


Figure 4.9. The Vallesella helmet. From *I Paleoveneti nel Bellunese*

There are passing mentions in the literature (Gambacurta 2003b: 83) but no indications of the nature of the site.

Monte Nenz in Trichiana (46) (fig. 4.10), not far from modern Belluno, yielded a small scale buried deposit consisting of local type fibulae and metalwork pertaining to the Hallstatt cultural milieu, namely a key and fibulae dating to the 7th century BC (Padovan pers.comm., Gambacurta 2003a: 50 ff.).

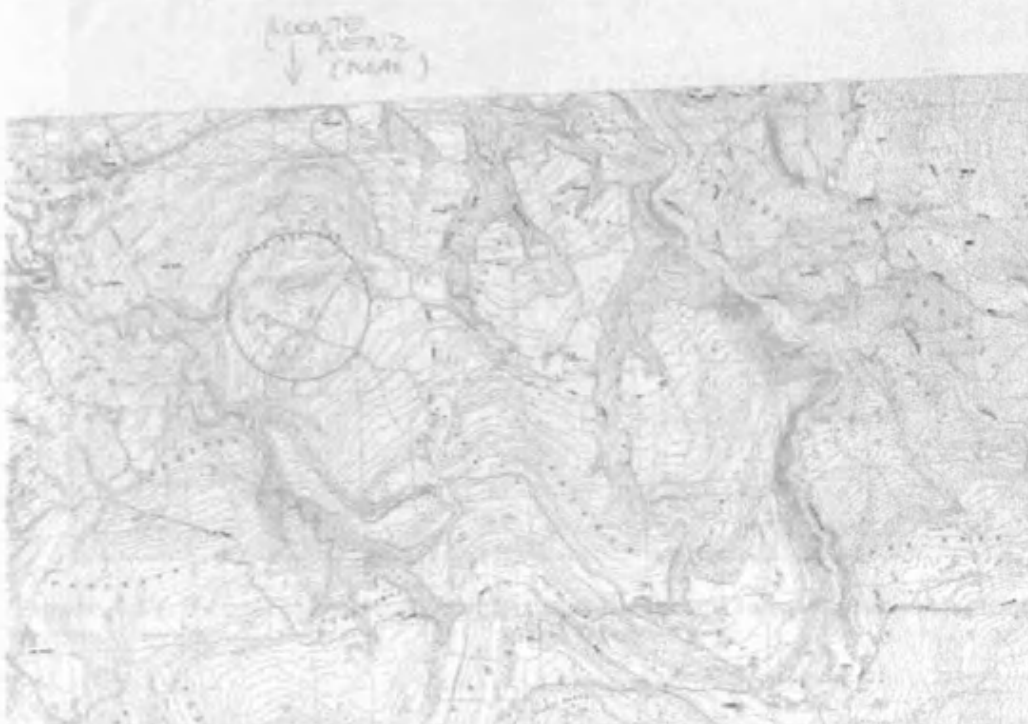


Figure 4.10. Monte Nenz, Trichiana- Belluno. IGM map

4.4.3 The Friuli area: Montereale Valcellina and the Cellina valley

The Cellina valley (Valcellina) is located in the Upper Pordenone area in the Friuli, bordering with the Veneto to the Northeast. The topographical connection between the Upper Piave Valley in the Veneto and the Cellina valley in the Friuli is emphasised by Monte Dolada (43, see chapter 5E) right on the boundary between the Veneto and the "Carnia" and their cultural individualities.

On the Dolada, we have high-elevation burials dating to the Iron Age and Roman period whereas on the other side of the mountain we have the river Cellina with the LBA-EIA votive deposit of Montereale Valcellina (38).

This stretch of the Cellina, isolated with no immediately close-by habitations or burials yielded a remarkable number of weapons indicating votive deposition and the cult of a river deity. The inference of a cult of an aquatic deity seems substantiated by the presence in Roman times of a nearby temple to the river god Timavo.

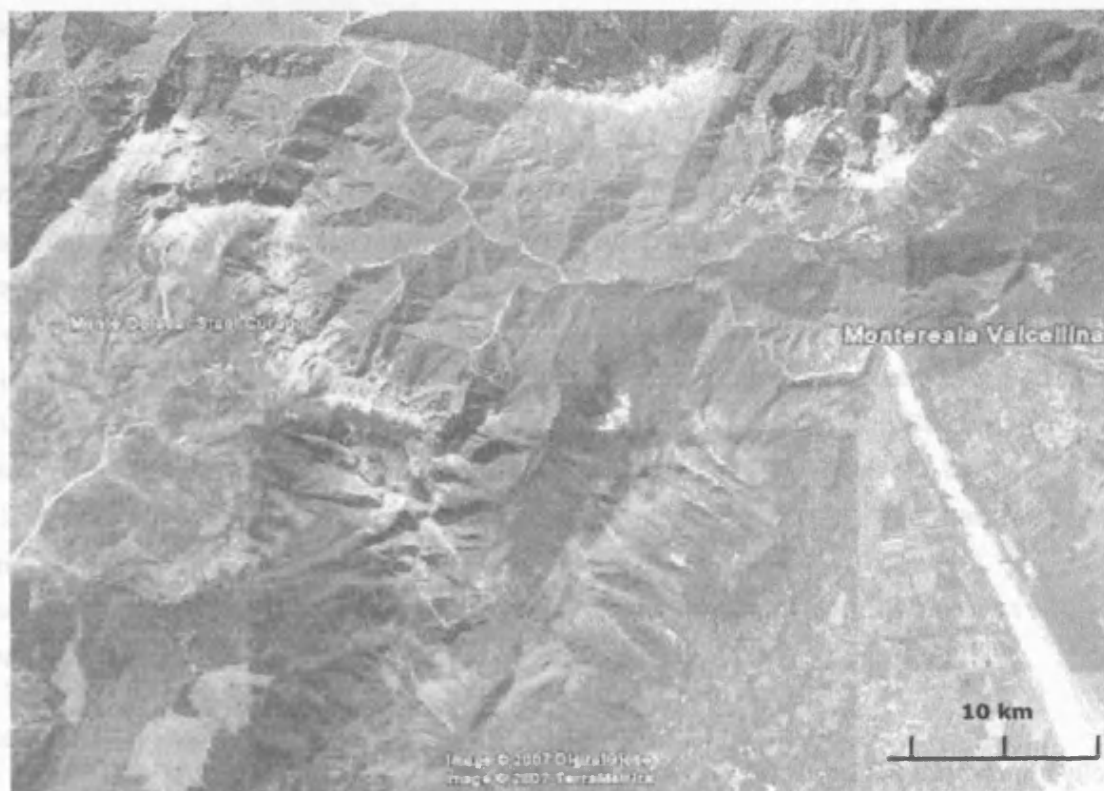


Figure 4.11. Montereale Valcellina (38) and its spatial relationship with Monte Dolada (43). From GoogleEarth

4.5 Votive deposits and settlements

One very important aspect of Venetic votive deposit studies concerns their distribution in the ancient territory, especially in relation to contemporary sites. It was essential to my study to locate these sites in their topographic settings and to assess the relationship between sacred sites, settlements and local communities.

Previous studies of this kind, applied to other areas and chronological periods (e.g. Edlund 1987) sought to provide a social and economic background for the occurrence of cult places in urban and rural contexts. In the case of the Veneto, this exercise has been applied to the protourban centre of Este and its "boundary" suburban cult places (Maggiani 2001: 77-78).

The same analysis could be applied to the centres of Padua and Vicenza, as well as Mel (50), which is increasingly emerging as a remarkable settlement (Padovan pers. comm.).

In the following sections, different types of urban and suburban deposits are presented, according to their geographical positioning in relation to settlement nuclei.

4.5.1 Urban deposits

Roughly 40% of the votive deposits in my database have urban or suburban connotations, in terms of their geographical connection with a settlement site. The connection between these sites and settlement units can occur in three different ways:

- the urban votive deposits occur within the settlement structure: i.e. small scale in individual household units or at a larger scale in association with a cluster of dwellings: Padua Ex-Pilsen (11,12), Padua Piazza Castello (13), Padua Via Cavour (14), Via Garibaldi (15), Via Rialto (16), Via Cesare Battisti (17) and Vicenza Piazzetta San Giacomo (31).
- they occur in the area immediately outside the settlement perimeter: Baratella (3) and Caldevigo (7) in Este, Padua Pozzo Dipinto (18), La Fornace (26) and Canevere (27) in Altino.
- they were situated in the greater settlement area: San Daniele (19) in Padua and Monte Altare in Vittorio Veneto (40).

Vicenza

The sacred site of Piazzetta San Giacomo (31) was a shrine within the settlement of Vicenza, a largish site of which little was known until recently.

Aside from its link with the course of the river Retrone, this urban deposit was established by the local aristocracy and was concerned or focussed on coming of age and social initiation rites (Zaghetto 2002: 307 ff), as well as with the appeasement of the local

deity/deities. It also yielded one bronze model of alphabetic tablets similar to those found at Baratella in a much greater quantity (cfr. Table 3b in Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006: 536). Typically Venetic in terms of material culture if relatively short-lived (active in the early 5th century until the 3rd century BC according to laminae chronology) (Zaghetto 2002: 306), the stipe of Piazzetta San Giacomo appears in stark contrast with Padua in its scale, coming across as a quasi-institutional cult place as opposed to small scale domestic shrines. It displays similarities to Meggiaro and Baratella in Este (6) due to the iconography of the votive laminae (images of single warriors or processions of armed individuals) (see fig. 4.15 on page 141) and to the similar (but not identical) aforementioned model of alphabetic tablet. The Piazzetta San Giacomo shrine developed alongside the settlement of Vicenza, but it is not known why its lifespan was so brief.

The domestic stipi of Padua

Domestic stipi are the so called ex-Pilsen A and B (11 and 12), Piazza Castello (13), Piazza Cavour (14), Piazza Garibaldi (15), Via Rialto (16), and Via Cesare Battisti (17): these deposits, located within the urban centre of Padua, were found in excavated house contexts and interpreted as a typically Patavine ritual form that is not encountered elsewhere in the Venetic world. Their distribution in the urban area tells us something of the ritual customs of this major ancient settlement, albeit it is not clear whether these sites were used over long periods of time and periodically emptied of their offerings or whether they were the outcome of exceptional, special circumstances, even one-off events such as rites connected with the laying of domestic foundations in the course of which objects were dedicated to the deity.

Greater Padua: Pozzo Dipinto and San Daniele

These two urban deposits (18 and 19) (fig. 4.12), mentioned above in sub-section 4.3.4 on river sites, are somewhat unusual, in that they occurred within the settlement fabric and perimeter, or at any rate in very close proximity to the settled area, and yet had a link and *raison d'être* in their fluvial context: San Daniele was located on the banks of the ancient course of the river Brenta and seems closer to rural stipi in character (Pascucci 1990: 47).



Figure 4.12. The stipi votive of San Daniele (diamond) and Pozzo Dipinto (circle)

Their incorporation in the modern urban territory makes it impossible to reconstruct their original context and whether they served transitional (i.e. access to the settlement area) as well as community-specific ritual purposes. Both have been studied based on the scarce offerings that constitute the dedications: bronzetti and miniature drinking vessels. These two sites had a seemingly stronger connection with drinking and heroic cults than their other Paduan counterparts, and were a sort of 'grey area' between urban and rural/territorial cult forms.

4.5.2 Suburban shrines

A more long-lived, larger scale type of deposit linked to settlement sites was the suburban stipe. These occurred outside the perimeter of the settled area but were connected to it by their proximity to a community of people and/or situated at strategic positions for access to the inner settlement area.

Este: Baratella, Meggiaro, Morlungo and Caldevigo

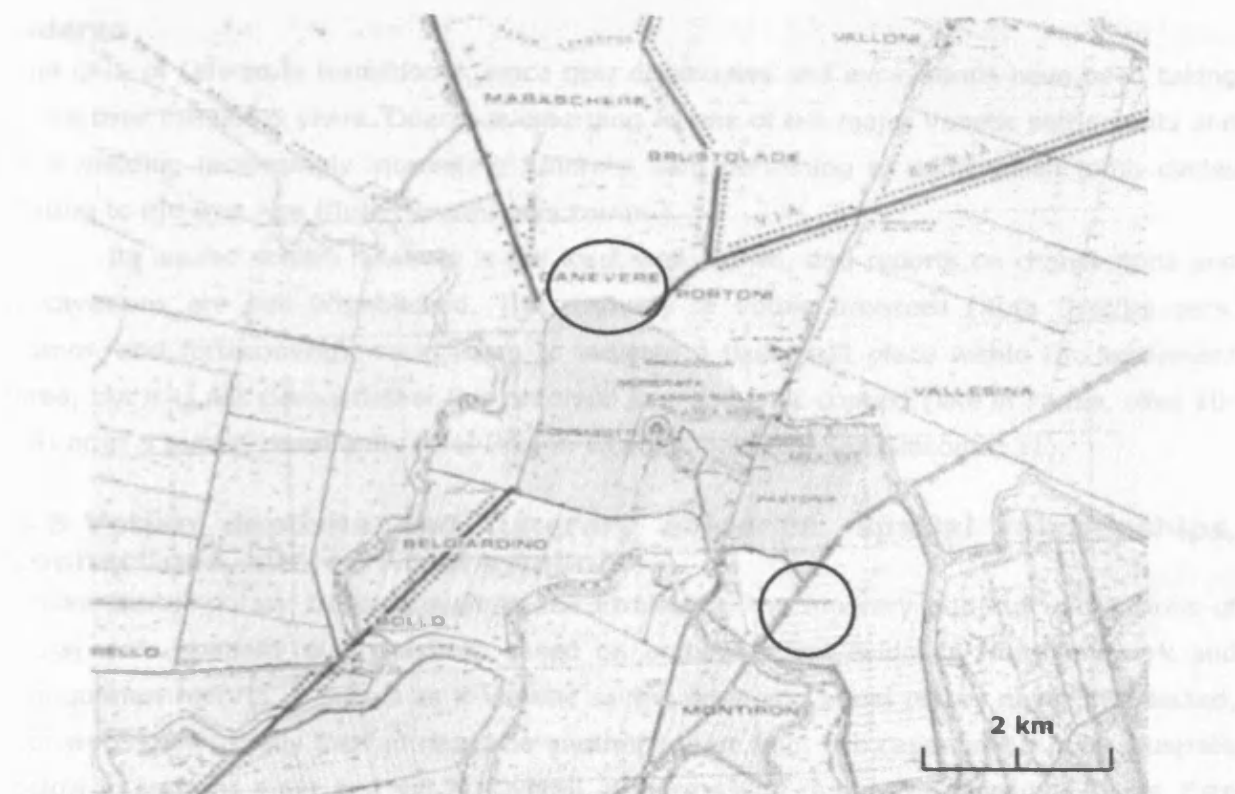
Este provides the greatest number of suburban shrines and votive deposits located at strategic points around the main settlement area: one to the Northwest, one to the Northeast, one to the Southeast and one to the Southwest. The other votive deposit in Este, Casale (5) has been discussed above in the section 4.2.2 on anomalous and late cult places.

Their spatial relationship with the settlement takes various forms: the deposit of Caldevigo (7) was situated on Colle del Principe, a prominent place with an excellent view over the settlement; the deposit of Morlungo (2) was situated on a plain area very close to the contemporary Capodaglio cemetery; Baratella (3) was located on the banks of the ancient course of the river Adige and Meggiaro (6) was isolated, in the middle of a marshy plain (Balista and Rinaldi 2002, 21) that was reclaimed in the Roman period, surrounded by the smooth heights of the Colli Euganei. There did not seem to be a pattern in the selection of the setting of these sacred sites, in the way that there was no catch-all model for establishing them in a given topographical location: they were created in specific places answering specific cult or symbolic requirements. The material culture, considered with their location, can shed light on the practices pertaining to each place: thus, can we talk of a prominent, elevated place for rites of passage such as "coming of age" (Caldevigo)? And of a portal between the city of the living and the city of the dead (Morlungo)? A liminal place where water met land (Baratella)? An isolated spot in a marshy locale for elite initiation and fertility rituals (Meggiaro)?

Altino La Fornace and Altino Canevere

The settlement of Altino started in the 6th century BC as a cluster of dwellings along the river Zero in the middle of the Northern Venetian lagoon, the so-called *Palude di Cona* (Tirelli 2002, 311). It developed as a lively commercial port for imports and exports from the La Tène, Etruscan and Greek milieus during its lifetime, and its two votive deposits clearly reflect the ancestral roots in the lagoon (the likely LBA phase of the cult place actually predates the settlement nuclei) and the emporic aspect of the place: overall both places seem to reflect an awareness of the special, liminal lagoon milieu where they were located.

The two deposits were located one to the North (Canevere, 27) and the other to the East-Southeast (La Fornace, 26) of the main settlement area. As anticipated above, the cult place of La Fornace predates the earliest settlement traces by at least three centuries, making the area a highly significant landscape in symbolic terms from the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age.



**Figure 4.13. The two votive deposits in Altino. Canevere (top) and La Fornace (bottom).
From Tirelli & Cresci Marrone 1999**

For want of substantial evidence and information, I will simply report that Canevere (27) probably consisted of a small-scale temple structure of which nothing but three architectural fragments survive, and that it was adjacent to the Brustolade cemetery, separated from the settlement area by the river Zero. It does not seem to have evolved into subsequent Roman cults, due to the construction of a *massiciata* (paved road) either above or very near it in Roman times.

La Fornace (26) was in the middle of a bend of the Santa Maria that flows out into a network of lagoon canals constituting the main water route to and from the settlement and the Adriatic.

Consistently with their spatial distribution in relation to the settled area, Canevere (27) with its position among cemeteries and further inland from the main canal route shows links with a deity of possible northern origins, Belatukad- (inscribed architrave fragment), according to the dominant interpretation (Tirelli 1999 and 2002). I will expand on the relationship with the nearby cemetery of Albertini in section 4.6.1.

Oderzo

The case of Oderzo is transitional, since new discoveries and excavations have been taking place over the last 5 years. Oderzo is emerging as one of the major Venetic settlements and it is yielding increasingly interesting funerary data pertaining to extra-urban tomb circles dating to the Iron Age (Ruta Serafini pers.comm.).

Its sacred sphere however is the least well-known, and reports on chance finds and excavations are still unpublished. The recovery of votive bronzetti (Ruta Serafini pers.comm. and forthcoming) would seem to indicate a likely cult place within the settlement area, but it is not clear whether this occurred in a domestic context (like in Padua, sites 10-16) or at a public, community level (like in Vicenza Piazzetta San Giacomo, 31).

4.6 Votive deposits and funerary evidence: spatial relationships, connections, shared ritual symbols

Unlike contemporary cultures such as the Etruscans, the funerary and cult dimensions of ritual were spatially distinguished; based on archaeological evidence from fieldwork and antiquarian reports, it seems as if Venetic sacred sites and burial places never intersected, nor were they usually located near one another (apart from two cases which I will illustrate below in sections 4.6.1 and 4.6.2). Overall, a mere 4% of the votive deposits (2 sites, Este Morlungo and Altino Canevere) in the Venetic Iron Age have a close spatial relationship with cemeteries.

Just as significantly, perhaps, the material culture items found in burials and shrines hardly ever overlap: when similar artefacts occur in funerary and cultic contexts, the items in question differ by size, material and treatment: for instance, in burials we have life-size pottery vessels, whereas in some shrines (Montegrotto) we find miniature versions.

There are however locations where the sacred and funerary realms coincide, and I will discuss them below.

4.6.1 Altino

The cult place of Canevere (27), located North-west of the main settlement, was adjacent to three burial nuclei in Altino: Brustolade, Albertini and Portoni (see fig. 5B.8 on page 196). The interesting feature of Altino consists of the plentiful horse burials associated with human remains and even on their own (Tirelli 1999) in the Brustolade cemetery.

The horse is a recurring motif in Venetic cult, although sacrifice of live horses is not encountered often in the archaeological record of sacred places. At a number of locations including Montegrotto (10) and Lagole (45), the horse is depicted either as a statuette or on laminae (Pascucci 1990, Dämmer 2001, Fogolari Gambacurta 2001, Gangemi 2003) and dedicated as a gift to the deity as a symbol of livelihood and prestige for the upper classes

of Venetic society. At Baratella (3), the recovery of a small pedestal with attached horse hooves and an inscribed word, "ekvon", seems to refer to the offering of horse figurines instead of live animals (Pascucci 1990: 212).

The offering of horses as both ritual gift to the deity and as grave goods is significant in light of other sites yielding horse burials, such as Oderzo (Ruta Serafini pers. comm.). In Altino the horse was perceived as part of the grave goods to accompany a wealthy and influential male in the afterlife; while the occurrence of independent horse burials bears witness to the importance and prestige of this animal as a strong ritual symbol (Tirelli 1999). See table 4.3 below.

Sites with whole horse burials	Sites with horse bones	Sites with horse figurines	Sites with horse laminae
Altino Fornasotti	Brazzoduro/ Monte	Lova	Lagole
Altino Albertini	Altare	Montegrotto Terme	Monte Calvario
Padua	Altino La Fornace	Altino La Fornace	
Oderzo		Mortise	
		Mandriola	
		Asolo	

Table 4.3. The occurrence of horses in Venetic ritual sites

4.6.2 Votive deposits and cemeteries in Este

Morlungo (2) is the only ascertained case in Este of a cult site (identified as mentioned above by a scatter of bronze artefacts of explicitly votive character) in close spatial association with a burial site.

The two sites, the Morlungo votive deposit and the Capodaglio cemetery were both located in the area occupied by modern Via Morlungo, Via Paleoveneti and Via Gambina in the south-west of Este (map **A1**. See fig. 4.14 for a sample of grave goods from the Capodaglio cemetery).



Figure 4.14. Grave goods from a 6th century tomb in Capodaglio. From Malnati and Gamba 2003

The two sites occupied a marginal position in relation to the settlement to which they belonged, both in actual spatial terms and in symbolic terms. They marked the Southwest boundary of the urban centre, as both cult site and cemetery were located on the South bank of the ancient branch of the Adige that flowed into the settlement in an East- West direction (Balista & Rinaldi 2002: 31). Both the cemetery and the votive deposit were transitional points between the living population, the religious character of a place of worship dedicated to fertility and the realm of the dead (cf. Pearce 2006). Since death and burial practices can be considered the ultimate change in status and rite of passage for humans, and fertility and reproduction are at the opposite end of the timescale, humans have always been concerned about the afterlife. The cult place of Morlungo (2) may have served an apotropaic function as well. Its positioning was on the south bank of the ancient branch of the Adige that separated the settlement area from the cemetery on the opposite bank (Balista and Rinaldi 2002: 22; Pearce 2006: 473).

The earliest phase of the Iron Age burial ground of Casa di Ricovero in the North sector of ancient Este dates to the 8th century BC: the elite tumuli burials (Gambacurta 2003c: 64) were located at the foot of the Colle del Principe where the stipe of Caldevigo (7) was located, starting off in the 5th century BC, when the cemetery at the foot of the hill was still in use. The cemetery of Casa di Ricovero was part of a "belt" of burial grounds North of the main settlement nucleus, culminating with Este Benvenuti (8) further east (see chapter 5E for fieldwork at Este Benvenuti) (Capuis & Chieco Bianchi 2006: 45-46).

4.6.3 Iconography of the dead, 'secular' iconography, the worshippers and images of the gods

The Veneti showed variations in the portrayal and iconography of the participants in cult practices (the worshippers of their deities) and the dead.

The main sources for the portrayal of the dead the 15 funerary stelae from Padua, whereas the source for the iconography of the worshippers comes from the votive objects themselves in the form of bronzetti or representations on laminae (Capuis 1993).

We find individuals, both living and dead, portrayed in a secular context in the situla art. In depictions on bronze vessels (situlae) and other bronze objects such as belt buckles, Venetic peoples are depicted engaging in a variety of activities, such as feasting, competing, fighting, making love and dancing. In addition to that, they are portrayed wearing the clothes and apparel that were suitable to their social groups (i.e.: religious officers, aristocrats, dancers, warriors and common people): the depiction of individuals is stylised and does not attempt to recreate lifelike features (Pascucci 1990: 140, 146).

Stelae burials are now thought not to be typical of Venetic culture as a whole but a peculiarity of the Patavine facies. They belonged to burials of members of the aristocratic elite of Padua and portrayed the deceased in the process of bidding farewell to the world of the living. The departed was depicted as a traveller going on a journey and being given a gift and a good luck wish for his journey by another person, usually their spouse. A few stelae depict a charioteer, a clear symbol of aristocratic stance (Capuis 1993; panel in Padua, Museo Civico).

4.6.4 The iconography of the votive objects

The portrayal of cult participants is more formulaic: they are depicted in the act of worshipping or offering gifts to the gods, but there is much less variety of depiction, much less attention to detail than in funerary art; this is largely because the individual was relatively less important in ritual circumstances than in funerary rituals, where the issues of kin and ancestry were very important (Pascucci 1990).

Did this differential portrayal and iconography answer different purposes?

One important observation to make is that many of the objects dedicated as votive offerings at Venetic cult places are of uniquely Venetic types. I will distinguish below between types of votives that are generally 'Italic' and found in other areas of Italy, and those that are a unique feature of Venetic material culture.

Italic:

Bronzetti (bronze figurines)

Miniature pots

Life-size pots

Coins

Weapons

Personal ornaments

Venetic:

Bronze laminae

Alphabetic tablet models

Writing styluses

Inscribed ladles

In addition to this, there are site-specific objects within the repertoire of Venetic votive types, such as ladles at special watery places and spring sites and 'peak laminae' at hilltop locations. I shall return to this topic in chapter 6.

The laminae from Este Meggiaro (6) (fig. 4.15), Baratella (3) (fig. 4.16), Caldevigo (7) and Vicenza Piazzetta San Giacomo (31) depict the warrior elite in a standard iconography of panoplies and military stance, as do the bronzetti from Northern sites such as Lagole (45) (fig. 4.18), Villa di Villa (42) (figs. 4.19, 5C.36) and other locations such as Altino La Fornace (26) and Montegrotto (10) (Pascucci 1990: 95).

The elaborately dressed Caldevigo (7) worshipper (formerly interpreted as the "Caldevigo goddess" by Callegari (Callegari 1938), fig. 4.20 below) could be seen as either a goddess or as a participant in a ritual for young aristocrats, and as such presumably portrayed wearing her finest outfit.

The women holding keys and surrounded by plants and feral animals on the Montebelluna and Ponzano discs have been interpreted as goddesses in virtue of the key/animal association (Capuis 1993; 1998).

The variety of objects that were gifts to the deities is outstanding, ranging from miniature and life size pottery vessels to weapons, from personal ornaments to figurines, from ladles and ladle handles to laminae, from animal bones as residues of sacrifice to alphabetical tablet models and styluses: the predominance of bronze artefacts however is remarkable. Some of the dedicated materials bore inscriptions referring to or displaying depictions of anthropomorphic figures that have been interpreted as deities rather than worshippers; the issue of deity representation on Venetic votives has been exhaustively approached in the past (Battaglia 1953, Maioli & Mastrocinque 1992, Capuis 1993 and 1999), but not in conjunction with a landscape-oriented approach.



Figure 4.15. A lamina from Este Meggiaro (6)



Figure 4.16. A lamina from Baratella (3). Photographs from Malnati and Gamba 2003



Figure 4.17. Lamina from Vicenza Piazzetta San Giacomo (31). From Zaghetto 2002b



Figure 4.18. A bronzetto from Lagole (45). From De Lotto 1961

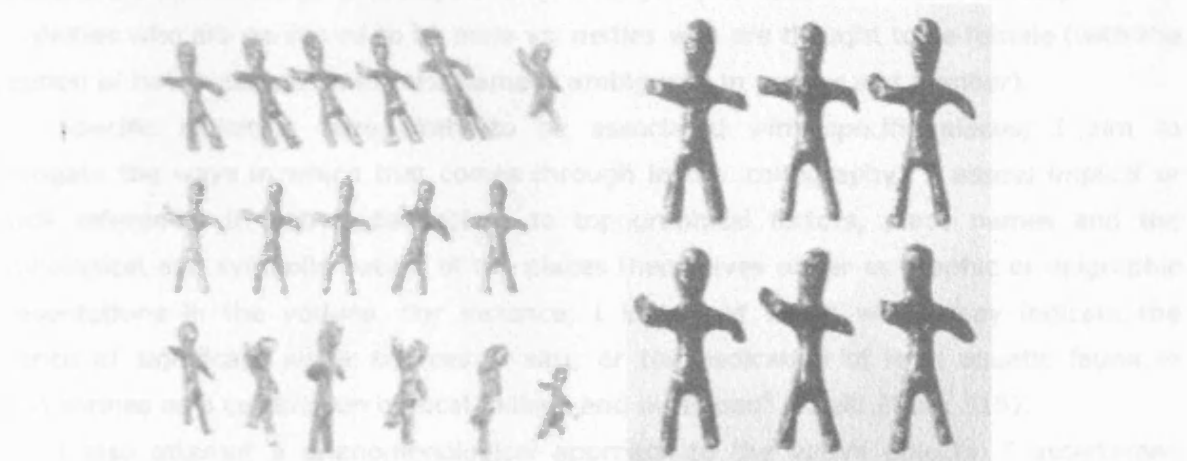


Figure 4.19. Bronzetti from Villa di Villa (42). Courtesy of the GAC



Figure 4.20. The 'Caldevigo Goddess' from Malnati and Gamba 2003

The main, if not sole source of identification of deities names and "appearance" comes from inscriptions and depictions on the votive objects found at several sacred sites.

There is a hierarchy of distinguishing criteria to be laid out in terms of Venetic deity representation and iconography.

- a) deities whose names and attributes occur more than once and the names that are a one-off and as such difficult to interpret, but generally thought to designate a deity
- b) deities whose name occurs at more than one site (only one instance is known) and those who are perceived as "place-specific" (the majority of "known" Venetic deities)
- c) deities who are perceived to be male vs. deities who are thought to be female (with the exception of two instances where the name is ambiguous in gender and number).

Specific divinities were likely to be associated with specific places; I aim to investigate the ways in which that comes through in the iconography. I assess implicit or explicit references in votive dedications to topographical factors, place names and the morphological and symbolic nature of the places themselves either as graphic or epigraphic representations in the votives. For instance, I looked at ladles which may indicate the presence of significant water sources in situ; or the dedication of local aquatic fauna in lagoon shrines as a celebration of local milieus and livelihood⁵ (Tirelli 2002: 315).

I also attempt a phenomenological approach to the votive objects: I ascertained whether they could have been displayed or appended for the worshippers to see, touch, hear and interact with (thanks to surviving hooks and nails), and asked whether their nature, material and quantity were meant to create a sensory impression on the participants

⁵ Altino La Fornace in Tirelli 2001: she reports the finding of several bones of aquatic birds and mollusc shells.

in the cult/ site visitors, and to what extent this aspect affected or enhanced the special experience of visiting a special place in the landscape.

4.7 'Monumentalisation' of sacred places

One of the phenomena contributing to the variety of Venetic sacred places is given by the degree of alteration of locales taking place before, during or after Romanisation. By 'monumentalisation' in this context I mean the construction of structures or buildings to enhance, replace or overlap a previously 'unaltered' locale in nature.

In the context of Romanisation, the process of monumentalisation of certain places rather than others can offer an insight into the degree of interaction with specific places by the Romans and the Romanised local communities, although as mentioned above it can be seen to be quite independent of the longevity of a place and, as I will argue, not necessarily impacting the perception of space and place.

I identified five separate instances: a) places that were monumentalised in a later phase of their existence (in the late Iron Age/Romanisation) and continued to be used throughout the Roman period, b) places that were monumentalised from the outset (early to mid Iron Age), c) places that were monumentalised from the outset (Iron Age) and abandoned shortly afterwards, d) places that were not monumentalised and were used well into the Roman period, and e) places that were not monumentalised and were abandoned in the Roman period.

Monumentalised late & used until Roman period	Monumentalised from the outset & used in Roman period	Monumentalised from the outset & abandoned early	Not monumentalised & used in Roman period	Not monumentalised & abandoned in Roman period
Este Baratella (3) Este Casale (5)	Altino La Fornace (26) Monte Calvario (47)	Lova (1) Este Meggiaro (6) Altino Canevere (27)	Abano Terme (9) Altichiero (20) Monte Altare (40) Col Castelir/Villa Di Villa (42) Lagole (45) Montegrotto Terme (10)	Este Morluno (2) Este Caldevigo (7) Padua Ex-Pilsen (11 + 12) Padua Pza Cavour (14) Padua Piazza Castello (13) Padua Pza Garibaldi (15) Padua Via Rialto (16) S. Daniele (19) Pozzo Dipinto (18) Mortise (21) Mandriola (22) Bertipaglia (23) Camin (24) Asolo (28) Vicenza (31) Magrè (32) Santorso (33) Bocca Lorenza (34) Trissino (35) Castello Roganzuolo (36) Presette (37) Montereale Valcellina (38) Scomigo (39) Vallesella Domegge (44) Monte Nenz (46) Valle di Cadore (48)

Table 4.4. Extent and chronology of monumentalisation of shrines/votive deposits

4.8 Literacy and cult places

Differential cult activities also reflected the spread and degree of literacy among the ancient inhabitants of the Veneto.

The two main contexts or spheres associated with writing were cult and funerary ritual, with the former seeing a wider spread and occurrence in spatial terms. A third application of writing is strictly limited to the Patavine territory and consists of the so-called *ciottoloni*, road or territorial markers, which have recently been “reinterpreted” as ritual markers (Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006, Kathryn Lomas pers.comm.).

Writing associated with cult practices occurred at Este Baratella (3), Vicenza Piazzetta San Giacomo (31), Lagole di Calalzo (45) and Monte Calvario in Auronzo (46) and, to a lesser extent in Este Meggiaro (6), Este Caldevigo (7), Montegrotto Terme (10), Altino La Fornace (26), Monte Altare (40), Col Castelir (42), Castello Roganzuolo (36) and Altino Canavere (27).

The uneven distribution of writing may depend on several factors such as the fragmentary and incomplete nature of the archaeological record, different cult practices that may or may not have required written dedications, and the extent of literacy of different communities.

Este Baratella has been interpreted as a “writing school” (Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006: 546) and as such it could be an unicum in the ancient world for the sacralisation of the very act of writing, not just as a simple medium to communicate with the deity (fig. 4.21).



Figure 4.21. Votive tablet from Este Baratella (3). Courtesy of G Arnosti

Early scholars attributed the stimulus, peak and focus of Venetic writing to the Atestine area, but the recovery of a substantial corpus of inscriptions in the Upper Piave Valley clearly shows that local variations of the Venetic script and vocabulary existed and that they possibly developed rather independently of each other, rather than originating in one place and radiating (spreading) to farther regions (Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006: 546). This consideration does not belittle the great importance of Este Baratella as an important

centre for cult-related writing as witnessed by a remarkable quantity of model alphabetical tablets and writing styli found in clear votive contexts, bearing dedications to the goddess Reitia; all the styli were offered by females, and the tablets mostly by males (Pascucci 1990: 211 ff.)

One model tablet occurred at Piazzetta San Giacomo in Vicenza (31): however it is rather unlike those dedicated at Baratella (3) and it is debated whether the Vicenza tablet was an imitation of these or whether the tablet as a votive type was a special feature of some of the South and West Venetic shrines.

Inscriptions on votive objects are the best way to gain an insight into the identity and features of the deities worshipped at any one site. To provide an idea of the variety of treatment of cult in the Iron Age Veneto and how these differences may be place specific and therefore concerned with different spatial contexts, I shall briefly outline the main 'characters' of the Venetic pantheon.

First of all, it must be pointed out that the Venetic deities known by names on inscriptions are only ever encountered in the Veneto. They do not occur anywhere else in Italy: they are uniquely Venetic, and, as we shall see in chapter 6, demanded very unique offerings.

The best-documented deity of the Veneti was the goddess Reitia/Pora/Sainate-. In a current interpretation by Italian scholar Marinetti 'Pora' seems to refer to the act of bearing children whereas 'Reitia' appears to indicate the act of writing for which the shrine was renowned in the Venetic world. Sainate, the only attribute known from the Venetic pantheon and pertaining to Reitia could qualify her as the healer (healing cult). Reitia was worshipped in Este, and perhaps in Magrè (due to the inscribed antlers): her cult and epithet Sainate are known from written dedications on many votive objects (Fogolari and Prosdocimi 1988, Pascucci 1990).

We only have three references to a deity, the so-called god Altno- as a possible cult figure at the Altino shrine of La Fornace (26), still currently under excavation and study. According to Tirelli, the etymology of the so-called god's name seems to bear a resemblance to the place name of Altino as known from Roman sources and even today (Tirelli 2002, 312).

The god Einaio- was worshipped in Caldevigo (7), one of the extra-urban shrines of Este, in no apparent connection with the cult of Reitia. We cannot infer much from the etymology of the name as it only occurs on one inscription.

The suburban shrine of Meggiaro (6) in Este yielded one inscribed lamina dedicated to a Heno[...]toi, interpreted as a deity, possibly a god concerned with coming of age and

fertility rites judging by the iconography of the dedicated objects, consisting for the most part of laminae depicting warriors and a large amount of charred bones of pregnant sows, pig fetuses and piglets found interred in ritual pits (Fiore and Tagliacozzo 2002, 185 ff.).

Trumusiate-/ Trimusiate- /Tribusiate- was worshipped in Lagole di Calalzo (45): one of the current interpretation of the recurring names associates the etymology to a 'wet or marshy location or place' (Marinetti in Gangemi 2003b, 89), whereas others maintain that it refers to a 'triple' deity, like *Hecate Trimorpha* (Mastrocinque 1987). With Trumusiate come the dedications of numerous ladle bowls and ladle handles bearing his/her name, as well as Latin inscriptions to Apollo the Healer, the successor of the indigenous deity in the Roman period.

The Po plain lakeside shrine of Montegrotto Terme (10) yielded a Venetic dedication to god Hevissos and one Roman reference to Aponus (one reference each).

The shrine of Monte Calvario in Auronzo (47), one of the latest in date as it was established during the Romanisation period and continued throughout the Roman Imperial period yielded written dedications to deities known as the Maisteratorfos- (Gangemi 2003c: 101, see below).

The piedmont shrine of Col Castelir- Villa di Villa (42) produced one inscribed lamina bearing the name 'Vesuta' in the Venetic script (see fig. 4.22) (possibly referring to a female deity), whilst many ithyphallic bronzetti found at this site suggest a predominantly male representation.

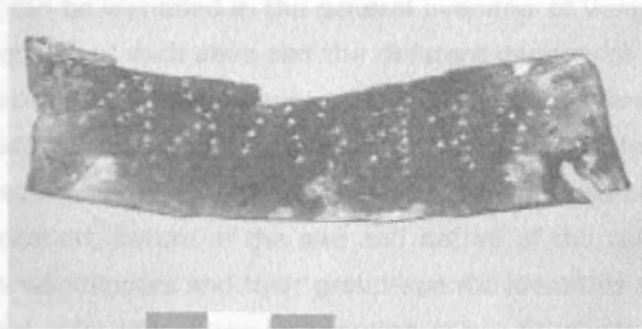


Figure 4.22. The inscribed lamina from Villa di Villa (42). Courtesy of the GAC

Writing and written dedications can sometimes also shed light on the agency of such offerings. The dedicatees could either be an individual person or a group, as I will illustrate below; some of the dedicators of gifts to the deities are named and the objects themselves speak of the person who gave them to the deity in first person (talking object). It is remarkable that the all dedicatees of writing-related objects (styli) in Baratella (3) were females (Whitehouse pers. comm.).

The trend of written dedications in the North seems to have concerned public or pilgrimage cult sites. One word occurring at Lagole di Calalzo (45) is *teuta*, traditionally translated as “community” (Marinetti 2001b, 66; Gangemi 2003b: 88 ff.). It mainly appears in the formula *teuta toler*, where the traditional translation reads: “the community gives/offers [something] [to the deity/deities]” inscribed on the dedicated objects (Pascucci 1990: 213-214). There are however problems with this interpretation (Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006: 542 ff.) that I will discuss in chapter 5D, namely that the term ‘teuta’ only occurs at sites with no nearby settlements! What communities?

The Monte Calvario (47) dedications also seem to comprise “collective” nouns pertaining to a “group”, along with dedications to a plural noun *Maisterator*- or *Maiestator*-, either interpreted as “cult officers” or deities in their own right (Gangemi 2003c: 101).

The adoption and use of writing in cult practices seems to have served two main distinct purposes: either as an individual (personal) act of devotion in the form of a named dedication or a group offering to their deity as part of rites or ceremonies of some sort. The two different practices are yet another factor bearing witness to the varied nature of Venetic cult places.

4.9 Patterns and common features

The varied nature of cult places can be observed in their positioning and relationship to other cult sites and surrounding landscape, as well as in terms of material culture.

What patterns can be identified in the general overview of Venetic cult places? Due to the relatively small number of such sites and the different degrees of information pertaining to them, I can offer preliminary observations and make tentative inferences in this regard.

A feature – and an actual pattern– is that all cult places in the Veneto responded to specific criteria and requirements of the local communities who established and used them: in other words, the location, nature of the site and nature of the cults performed at those sites depended on the worshippers and their group-specific identities and purposes, whether it was a purification site, a fertility shrine or a coming of age ritual site.

The second shared feature is that the individual cult recipients and methodologies could be very specialised and vary according to locations, even in spatially limited territorial units like the Upper Piave valley, hence the often substantial, if not striking individualities detected in cult objects from Monte Altare (40), Villa di Villa (42), Lagole (45) and Monte Calvario (47).

A third consistent pattern can be observed in the choice of raw materials employed to produce cult object: strictly bronze for figurines, models, ladles and laminae, and pottery as drinking vessels.

The marked individuality makes it rather difficult and hazardous to generalise statements about Venetic cult places, which is why the standard 'umbrella approach' to Venetic cults is not sustainable.

The individuality of cult places and cult practices can be summarised as follows:

- Votive deposits occurred in varied topographic locations, some of which blended in with the surrounding land morphology while others were in more or less striking contrast with the character of the local landscape; deposits and sacred places had varied degrees of visibility to and from the surrounding territory
- Votive deposits occurred in places that had a special character, but were often unmarked by human agency (i.e. building of more or less permanent markers/structures), or the degree of human manipulation varied
- The degree of manipulation in the Romanisation and Roman period differs greatly from location to location regardless of the geographical positioning of shrines
- The use, duration, time span and intensity of use of sacred places varied throughout the land and did not depend on the vicinity of a particular place to a settlement site
- Votive deposits did not serve the same cult purpose at all locations, but rather the nature of the 'holy place' were location-specific
- Deities seemed to vary from place to place even in spatially restricted areas
- Votive objects varied substantially in quantity, nature and treatment.

4.10. Conclusion

In this chapter I have provided an overview of all known Venetic cult places divided into thematic sections rather than in chronological sequence, in order to provide a regional comparison and contrast of the variety of places that compose my research database. The variety, irregularity of occurrence, and different locations of Venetic cults in the first millennium BC make for a challenging study.

In the following chapter 5 I shall describe my own fieldwork and present a number of case studies to illustrate the variety and special character of Venetic sacred places in their landscape. I grouped the sites according to their geographical locations and topography to allow a comparative assessment.

Chapter 5. Fieldwork report - a Venetic travelogue

"The stone crosses along the way reminded the traveller of the presence of God (...). The prehistoric monuments and tors along the way were deprived of their threatening, mythical connotations and served as guide marks."

Karin Altenberg, "Experiencing landscapes",
p. 101

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will describe my fieldwork at twenty locations. I decided to divide my fieldwork report into five sub-sections rather than five separate chapters, so as not to limit my discussion of sites to particular areas, and so that all the results could be available at a glance, to aid cross-comparison.

This selection of sites covers a variety of landscape settings, namely the milieu of the river Brenta in the outskirts of Padua, the Northern Venetian lagoon and the South-east lagoon, the Po plain, the East and West piedmont and the Alps. This broad spectrum of contexts and votive deposits will shed light on the complex variety and individuality of cult places in the Iron Age, Romanisation and the Roman and post-Roman periods.

For each site or case study I provide an experiential site map illustrating my fieldwork in a thick, narrative and accretional manner, comprising visual impressions, thoughts and impressions and the site-specific material culture. Maps are reproduced in the main body of the thesis and **C1** is also enclosed as a freestanding A2 sheet inside the back cover of the appendix volume.

I will subdivide the account of each site or case study into four sections: one devoted to landscape context, one to background information I had on the sites before setting out to explore them, one about material culture and one describing my own fieldwork.

Section A. Sites in the Po plain

Section A, the first of five chapter sub-sections dedicated to the description of my fieldwork, illustrates four case studies: Este Morlungo (2), Este Meggiaro (6), Este Caldevigo (7) and Montegrotto Terme (10). The numbers in brackets refer to site ID numbers as listed in appendix 1.

In addition to the original fieldwork forms, included in appendix 2 (separate volume), I will describe my fieldwork at each site, in order to expand on the knowledge of each site contained in the literature with my hands-on site-specific assessment in the field. I will attempt to identify similarities and idiosyncrasies in the landscape settings of the four sites,

all of which are located in the Po plain, and compare these with the findings from the other sites discussed in the other chapter sections, B-E.

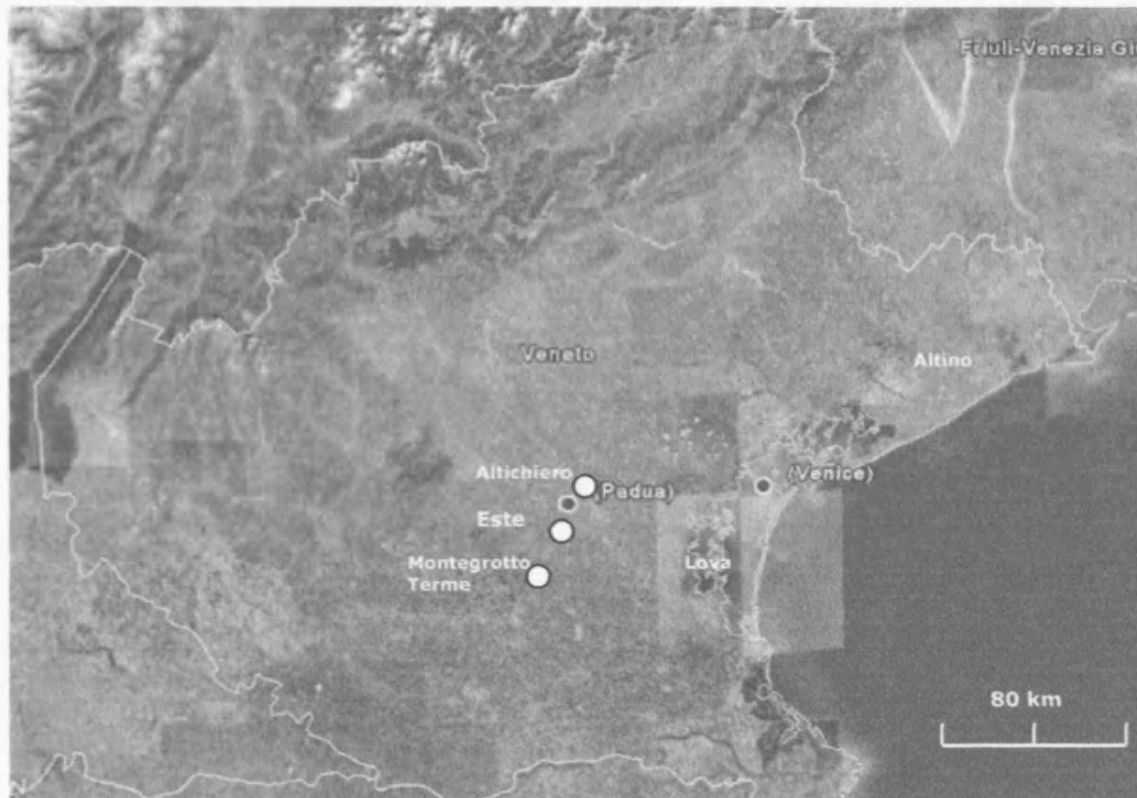
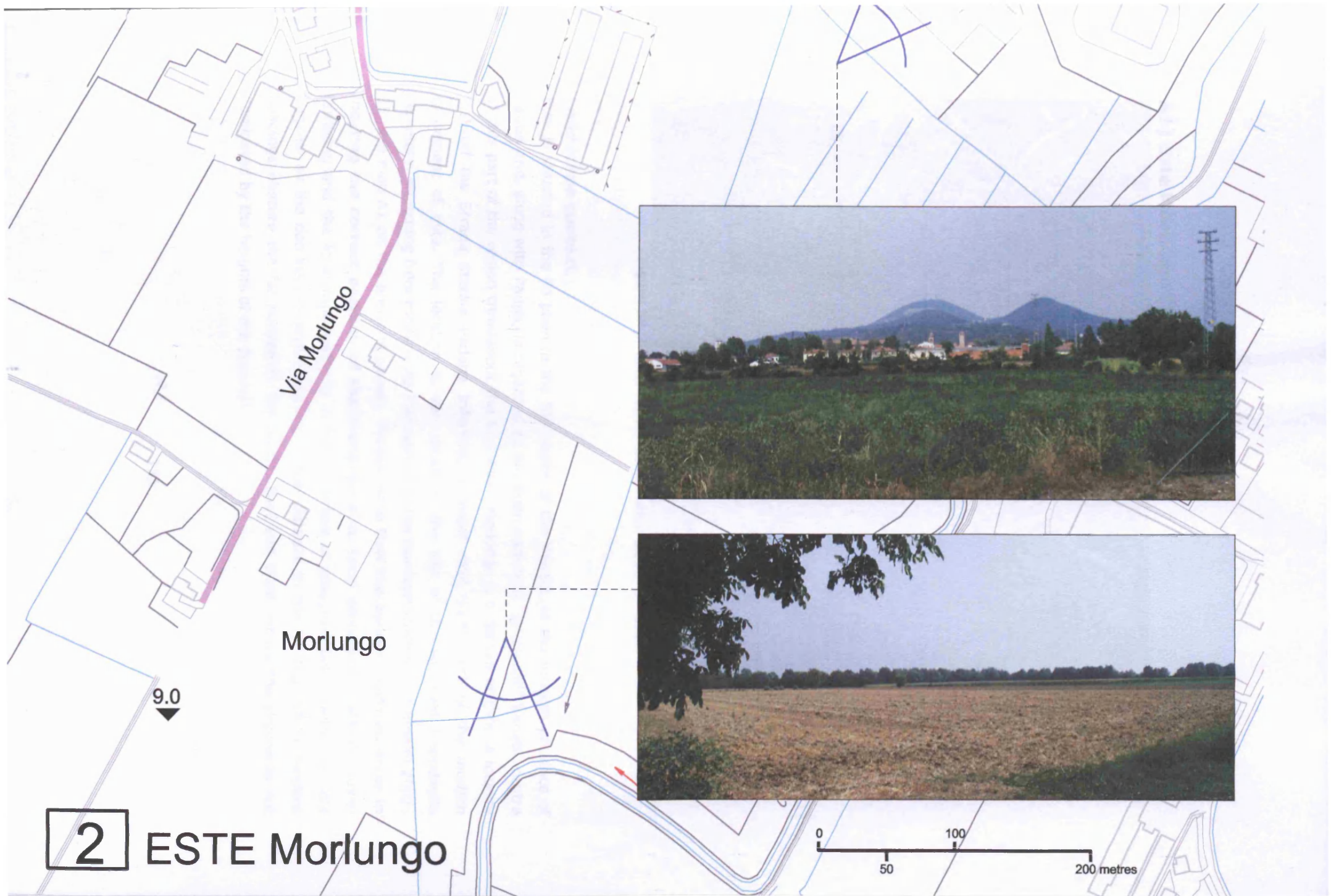
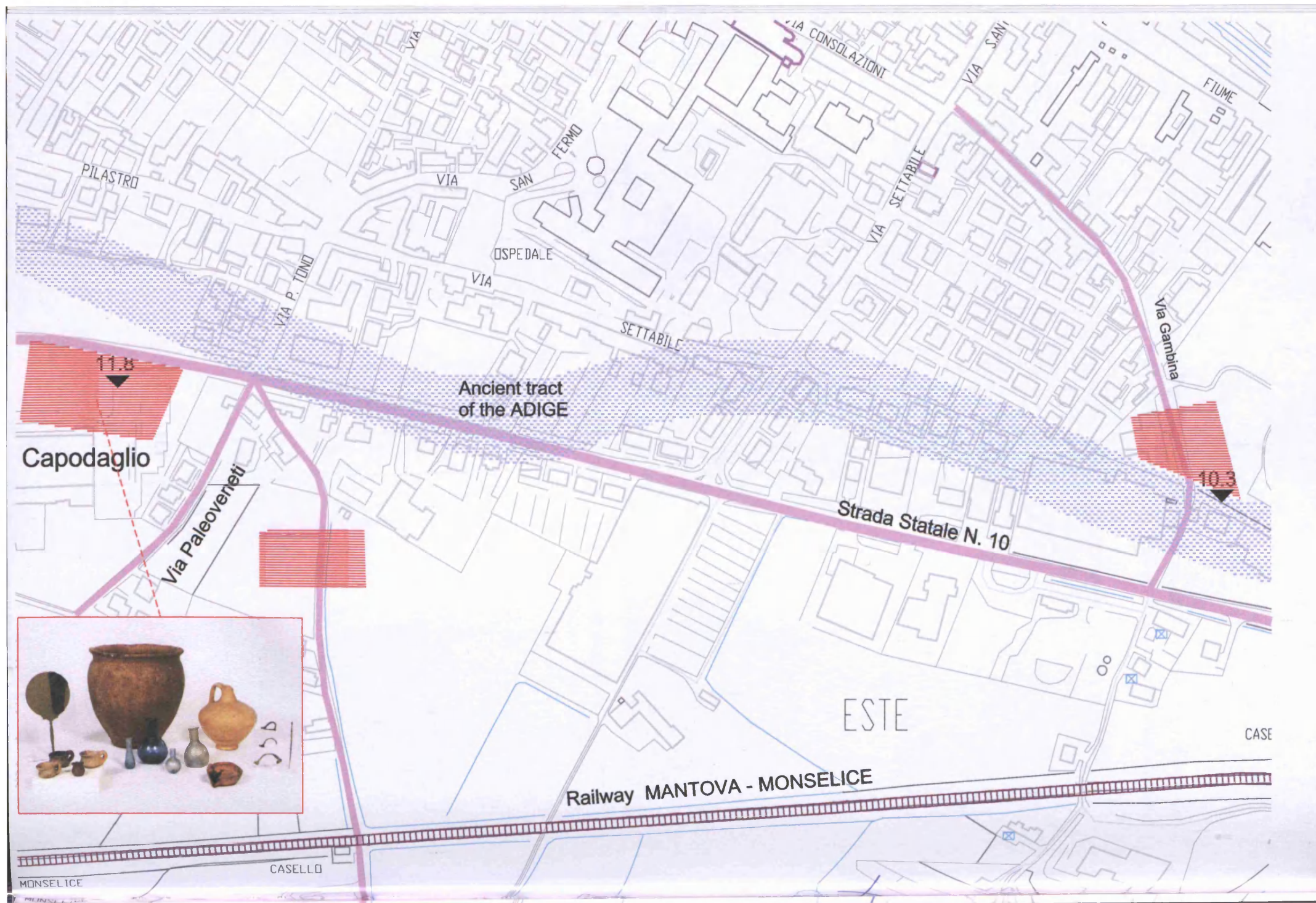


Figure 5A.1. The Veneto and the Po plain (GoogleEarth)





A1) Este Morluno (2)



Figure 5A.2 Este. Morluno is indicated by an arrow

Background information

The site has never really been surveyed or excavated on a large scale or systematically; the

Landscape context

Este is situated in the Po plain in the SW sector of the Veneto, in the modern province of Padua and, along with Padua, is regarded as the main and most "urbanised" Venetic centre of this part of the region throughout the Iron Age. Morluno is a suburb of Este, a locality just off the Strada Statale Padana Inferiore, a major road South-west of the modern settlement of Este. The location is very close to the site of the so-called Capodaglio cemetery, stretching from modern Via Paleoveneti to Via Gambina (Balista and Rinaldi 2002: 35, see map A1 on the previous pages). **Please note that the author made an error in locating the correct position of the Morluno site.** Local geology consists of alluvial terracing and the local topography is a flat landscape of ploughed fields, with the Colli Euganei as the dominating skyline feature in the distance to the NE (fig. 5A.3). Modern buildings obscure the far horizon to the South, East and West, where the skyline is not dominated by the heights of the Euganei.

The finds pertaining to the so-called votive deposit were recovered in a field. Refer again to map **A1** for local topographical details.

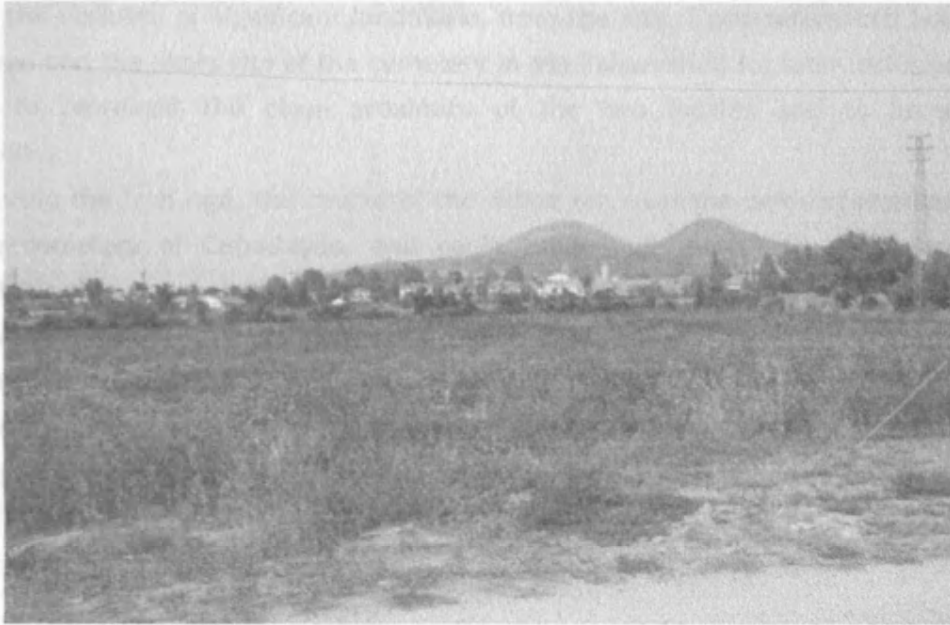


Figure 5A.3. A view over to the Colli Euganei from Morlungo (2). Photograph by author

Background information

The site has never really been surveyed or excavated on a large scale or systematically; the objects that indicated the likely presence of a small-scale votive deposit were few and far between and clearly in secondary contexts. In 1958-59 surface objects were recovered and a small pit excavated (Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992: 35). Balista and Rinaldi established that the main branch of the Adige in the Iron Age flowed in the direction West-east through the locality known as Morlungo (Balista and Rinaldi 2002: 19 *ff.*) In the Bronze Age this locality was often flooded by the southern branch of the Adige that flowed through it, but the area of the burial ground (Capodaglio) was sheltered from the course of the river, so that the graves were not affected by flooding (*ibidem*: 20 *ff.*).

Fieldwork

The location was relatively easy to find and access despite contradictory topographical indications in the literature (i.e. Balista and Rinaldi 2002, Fogolari and Prosdocimi 1988). I was lucky enough to explore the area with the aid of a local resident who had witnessed the archaeological appraisal undertaken in the late 1950s. This locale would have been 1.5 to 2

km South-west of the contemporary settlement nuclei of Este in the Iron Age and separated from them by the ancient tract of the Adige (Pearce 2006: 473).

As part of my field assessment and documentation I photographed the location and assessed the visibility of significant landmarks from the site. I geo-referenced both the field of Morlungo and the likely site of the cemetery in Via Paleoveneti for later inclusion in a GIS, in order to represent the close proximity of the two locales and to ascertain their intervisibility.

During the Iron Age, the course of the Adige ran near the fields of Morlungo and the extensive cemetery of Capodaglio, and could have been perceived as a symbolic and physical boundary between the two very distinct and equally significant domains of human concern with the unseen world (cemetery and cult place) and the city of Este, due to the ritual activities taking place on or near its shores.

Interpretation of this locale in the field is somewhat impeded by the shift of the river Westward (the *Rotta della Cucca* flood of AD 589 discussed in chapters one and four) and the total lack of inter-visibility of the two sites today (Morlungo and Capodaglio) owing to modern constructions and the railway line.

We visit the locale on an oppressively hot summer afternoon and seek the shelter of shade under one of the few trees in the field where the objects had been found. The locale feels very spacious, exposed and this sense is not hindered by the proximity of the buildings. The air feels hot and envelops the landscape in heatwaves, blurring the contours of the Colli Euganei in the distance (see fig. 5A.3 above).

The symbolic liminality of Morlungo (i.e. point of contact of different realms) is strengthened by its physical location along the river bank and by the proximity to the Capodaglio cemetery, roughly contemporary with the votives found at Morlungo and situated on Via Paleoveneti, now some 250 metres to the north.

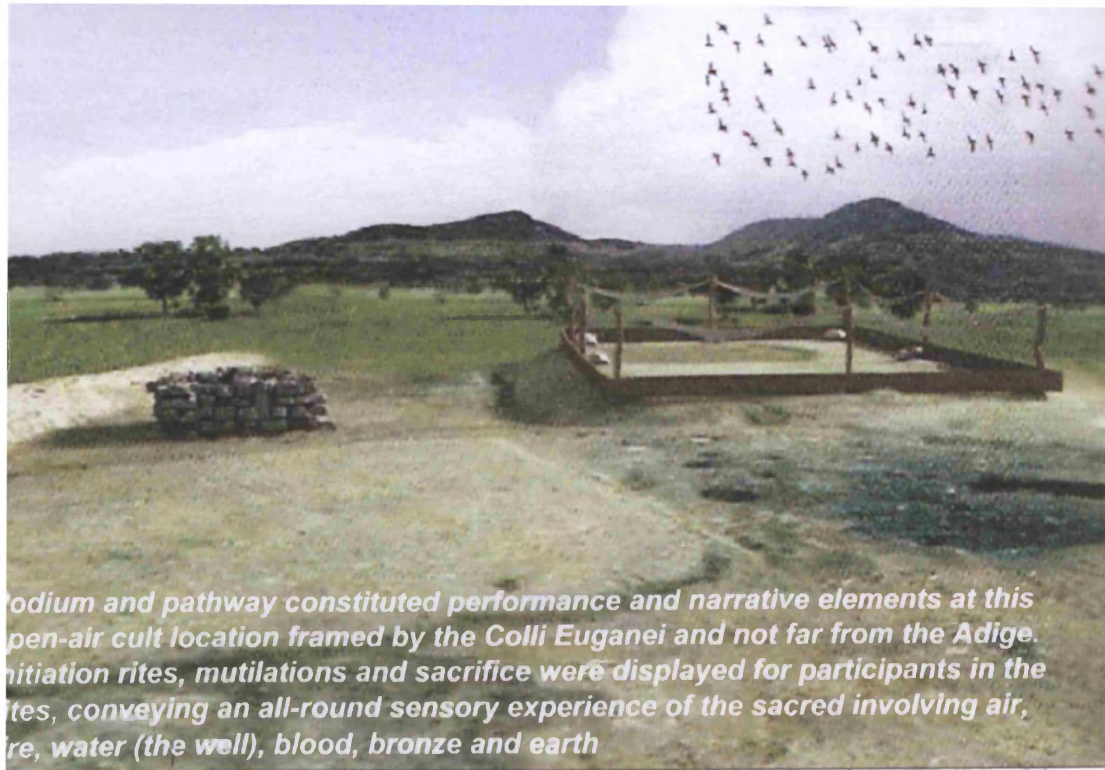
Material culture

The recovery of a scatter of bronze anatomical votives representing male and female genitalia was used to ascribe the function of "fertility" cult to this location.

Despite the visible changes to the landscape, I was able to make a few observations with the aid of the (albeit scant) knowledge of the offerings found at Morlungo. The predominance of genitalia among the votive objects (13 out of the overall 22 objects) linked with a ritual significance to do with both healing and fertility could mean that the cult place- a small scale, maybe individual or 'personal' cult location- was established there to exorcise

the realm of the dead represented on the other shore (Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992: 36). The lack of anthropomorphic representation, status symbol items and agricultural references seems to concentrate the purpose of this small-scale cult place in the realm of private cult, perhaps even individual acts of worship, on a much smaller scale than the other Este shrines. On the other hand, the proximity to the ancient branch of the Adige could have led worshippers to deposit their votive gifts in the water or near the river bank, leading to the loss of objects.

A further discussion of the significance of the votive deposit of Morlungo is offered below and in discussion chapter 6.



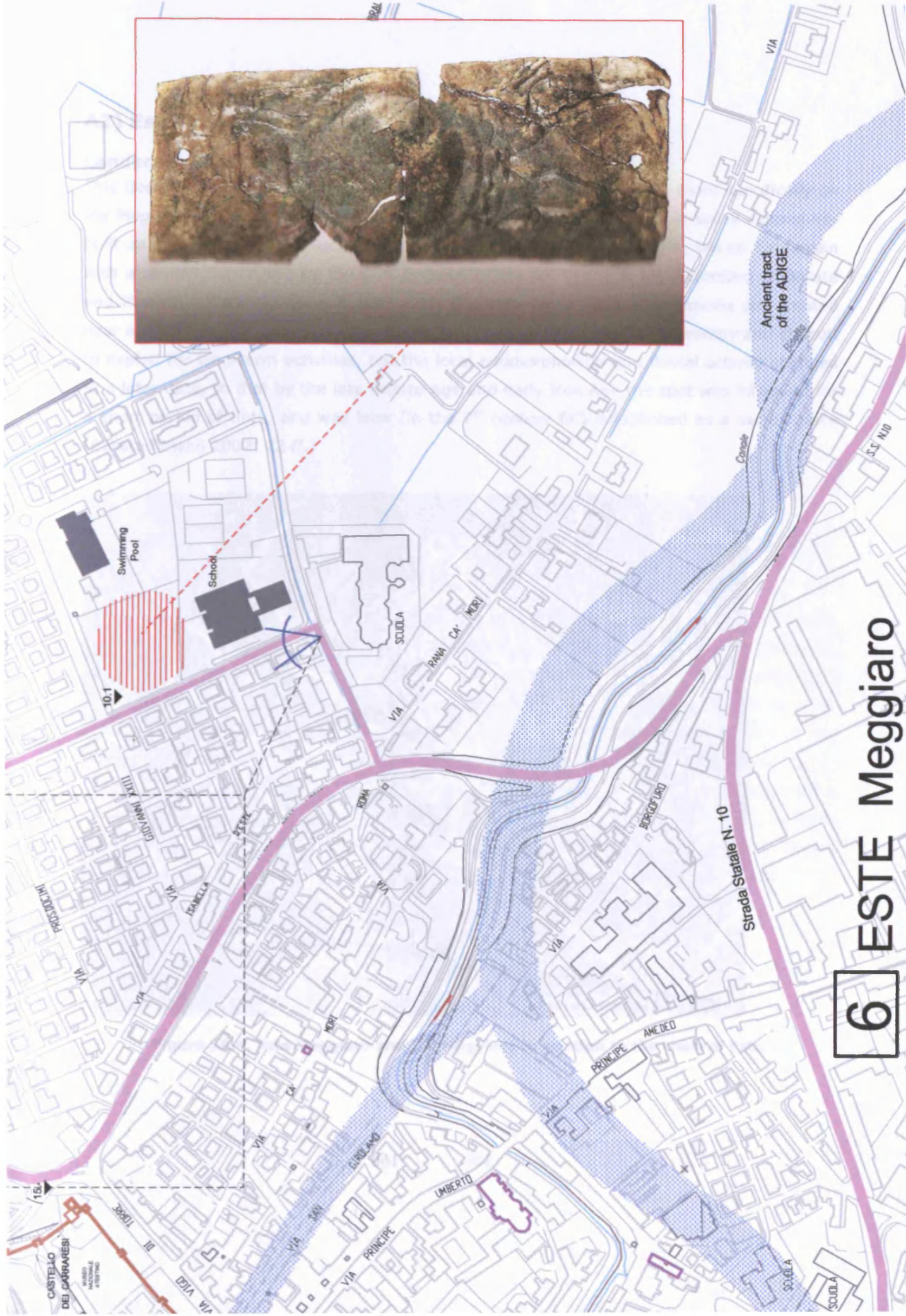




Figure 5A.5. Este Meggiaro (6), Via Meggiaro. Photograph by author

Background information

Excavations carried out in the last five years unearthed what could be described as a highly organised shrine complex composed of distinct areas dedicated to different cult practices. The shrine consisted of an 'open air' cult place in the usual fashion of the Venetic peoples. A wealth of votive objects was recovered under the present-day stadium and sports complex of Via Meggiaro, both as clusters of material in situ -buried in pits- and scattered in the subsoil (see Balista, Sainati and Salerno 2002 for a comprehensive excavation report).

The earliest phases of the sanctuary of Meggiaro, the 7th century BC, comprised a *massicciata* (a paved path) later flanked by a raised podium structure (7.5 x 5 m), an open air raised area limited by 8 trachite marker stones and empty in the middle (Balista, Sainati and Salerno 2002: 129; Ruta Serafini and Sainati 2002: 217) which was to become the very core of the sacred complex. See fig. 5A.6 for a reconstruction.

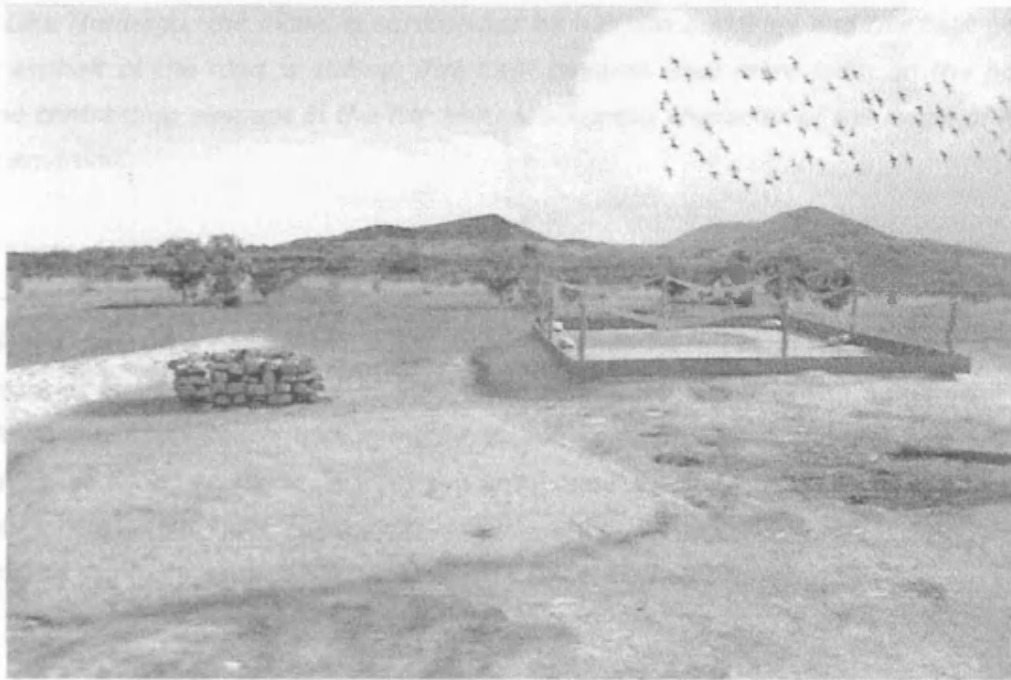


Figure 5A.6. The reconstruction of the Meggiaro cult place in Este. From Ruta Serafini 2002 (ed.)

Later phases of the shrine, which was frequented until the early 3rd century BC, featured hearths and "storage" pits (ibid: 132-133).

In the 4th century BC a well was excavated in the middle of the sanctuary, alongside more pits to store ritual objects such as bronze votives representing single warriors, personal ornaments and remains of sacrificed sows and suckling pigs (ibidem: 138). The sealing of the well in the 1st century BC indicates a deliberate termination of the cult use of Meggiaro, which became pastureland in the Roman period.

Fieldwork

Similarly to my field visit to Morlunco (2), I was acutely aware of the substantial changes to the location of the Iron Age cult place and of how these changes could affect my perception and interpretation of its landscape settings; however, I decided to carry out my fieldwork assessment nonetheless. Regardless of modern build-up, I wished to provide a spatial background and a topographical and photographic record of this newly discovered place of worship of Iron Age Este.

Like Morlungo, the locale is surrounded by modern buildings and the heat generated by the asphalt of the road is stifling. The Colli Euganei once more loom on the horizon, a welcome contrasting element in the flat and monotonous character of the locale of Meggiaro and its environs.

First of all I set out to assess its degree of isolation and seclusion: I found that palaeo-geological and palaeo-botanical studies of the area had established that the area was not wooded, and on a natural alluvial plateau. It would have been located 1.5-1.7 km East-North-east of the ancient centre of Este and within easy reach of the settlement: it was most likely an open space and a highly visible spot, therefore not hard to locate. The positioning at a certain distance from the settlement marks it as a "suburban" cult place, and this locale might have been chosen as another "landmark" in the "crown" of shrines surrounding the main settlement nuclei of Este (Maggiani 2002: 80).



Figure 5A.7. A panel showing the finds from the northern cemeteries of Este. Photograph by author

The river Adige flowed near the stipe of Meggiaro (6) although the location must have initially been marshy rather than fluvial. The water element, mainly represented by the well, seems therefore to have been also influential for the establishment and used in the rites performed at this cult place, which according to the current interpretation of the votive objects and dedications, was established as a shrine dedicated to initiation rituals for young male members of Este's aristocratic warrior class (the portrayal of warriors on the laminae).

Material culture

The well suggests a wish to purify the area of the shrine and the need for access to fresh water bearing witness to a new dimension of the cult, presumably consisting of libations and drinking rituals (suggested by the recovery of cups and goblet shapes, see *ibidem*: 130 ff. and Ruta Serafini and Sainati 2002: 219); the well was also used to store and easily retrieve the dedicated objects, ranging from animal remains and bronze objects to pottery.

The likelihood of rites of passage at this site is further substantiated by the preservation of fragments of human tissue and teeth in personal ornaments or amulets (*bullae*), indicating mutilation for ritual purposes (Ruta Serafini and Sainati 2002: 223, Elisa Perego pers. comm.).

The presence of the raised bank (*sacello*) and the paved path (fig. 5A.6), constant and long-lived features of the shrine complex, seem to suggest a public, dynamic and narrative character of the cult activity. The bloody element of ritual mutilation could have represented a visually and aurally 'strong' and intense experience for the spectators, and an ordeal for the participants. Who knows if this place was feared, longed for or welcomed when the time came for the boys to become warriors, or whether a mixture of emotions was felt?

Finally, the raised bank or platform with no explicable practical function could have served as a sort of "stage" or "podium" for displays.

These open air activities, requiring room and a significant extent of space for movement and processions, could have been performed by the armed males depicted in the laminae, symbols of status and social stance rather than warfare tout court. Despite the absence of laminae portraying processions at Meggiaro (Zaghetto 2002a: 144) unlike those from Vicenza, we know from situla art that processional rites and events involving individuals in arms were a feature of Iron Age Este.

If the communal, processional element is not portrayed at Meggiaro, this might indicate that it was rather a more elitist, private sacred place: a local elite shrine perhaps? The predominant elements indicate a male cult, indicated by the recovery of many miniature bronze shields and laminae depicting warriors (see 4.15 on p.133). However, there are signs of a local agricultural/fertility cult in the form of edible domesticates and plant offerings. The predominantly male character of the site is reflected in the total lack of laminae or bronzetti depicting females, unlike the stipi of Caldevigo (7) and Baratella (3) where both sexes are portrayed in the votives, with females predominant at the latter cult place. Below is a sample of the laminae from this site (fig. 5A.8).



Figure 5A.8. Portraits of women at Este Caldevigo (7). From Pascucci 1990

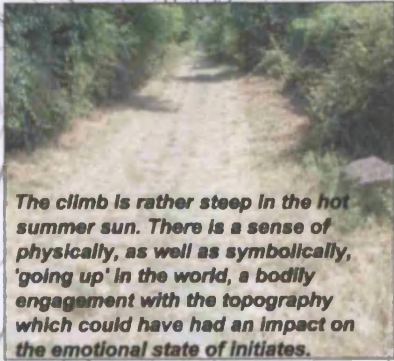
Whatever the cults performed, the shrine was abandoned in the 3rd century BC. *Two centuries later the well was sealed shut. What happened⁶?*

⁶ Was the abandonment a symbolic act performed by people who were going through the identity-altering process of Romanisation? Was the shrine's symbolism as elite stronghold put into discussion and hence less meaningful under the new rulers?

7

ESTE - Colle del Principe

CASA MASIERI



The climb is rather steep in the hot summer sun. There is a sense of physically, as well as symbolically, 'going up' in the world, a bodily engagement with the topography which could have had an impact on the emotional state of initiates.

Colle del Principe

115.4

1056 fortifications

109.2

112.5

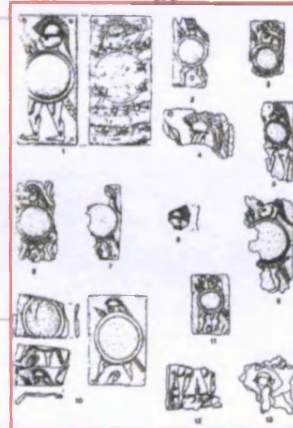
105.2

102.7

96.7

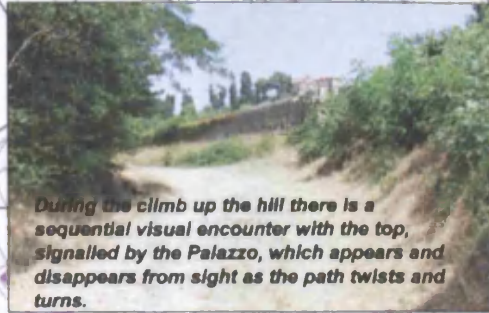
82.5

S.P. N62



0 50 100 200 metres

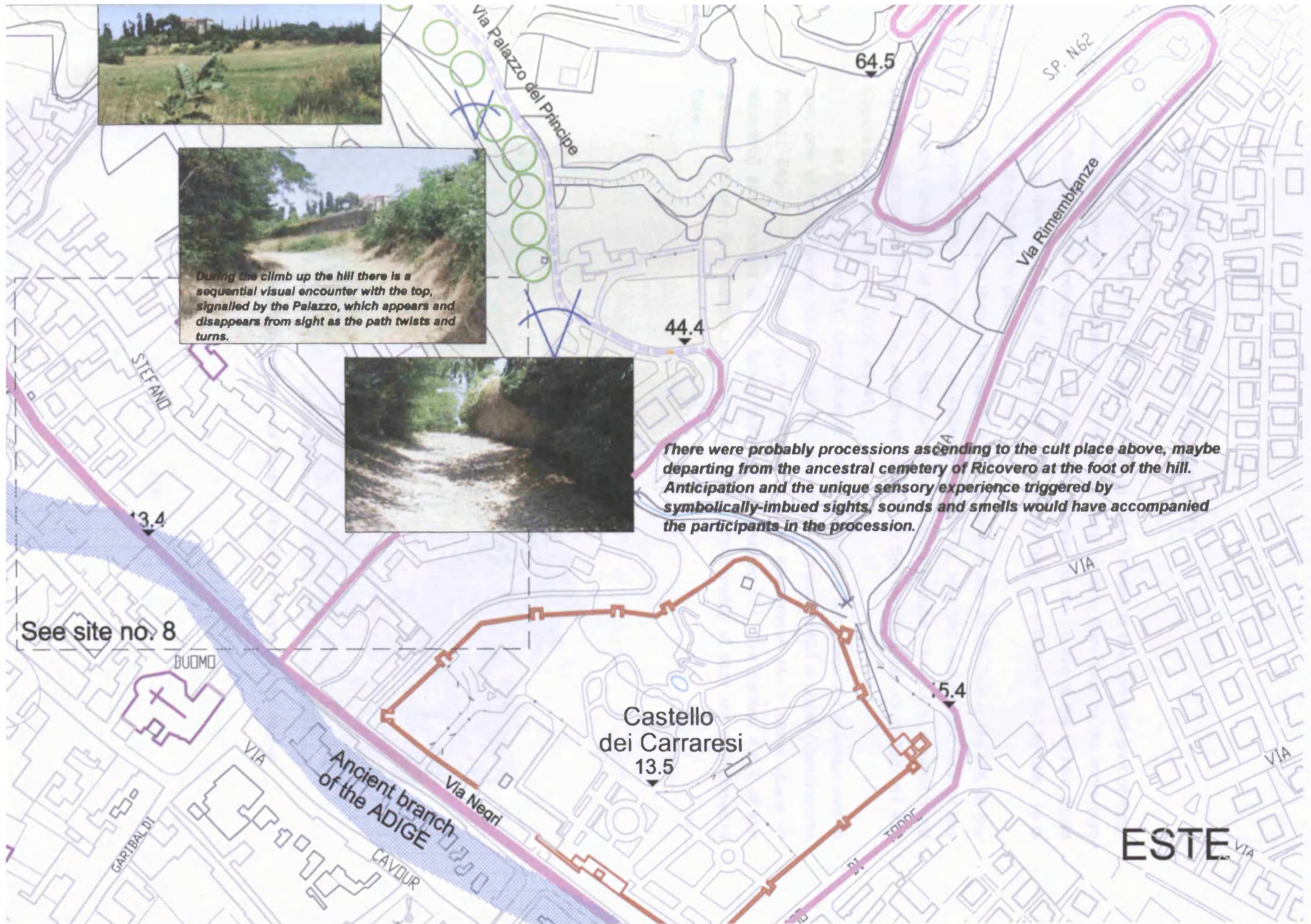
NORTH



During the climb up the hill there is a sequential visual encounter with the top, signalled by the Palazzo, which appears and disappears from sight as the path twists and turns.



There were probably processions ascending to the cult place above, maybe departing from the ancestral cemetery of Ricovero at the foot of the hill. Anticipation and the unique sensory experience triggered by symbolically-imbued sights, sounds and smells would have accompanied the participants in the procession.



See site no. 8

Castello
dei Carraresi
13.5

ESTE

A3) Este Caldevigo- Colle del Principe (7)

Landscape context

The Colle Del Principe is a hill (fig. 5A.10) (103 m a.s.l.) located in the northern part of Este. The local environment of Caldevigo, on the main route leading from Este to the motorway (Milan-Bologna) and Montagnana / Monselice and flanked by the course of the torrent Scolo di Lozzo, is that of a belt of hills and hillocks interrupting an otherwise flat terrain, as is typical in the alluvial Po plain.

The hill was less than 1 km north of the settlement site. At the foot of the hill, at the more central location of Ex Casa di Ricovero (fig. 5A.9), was the earliest and one of the wealthiest cemeteries of Iron Age Este, a "dynastic" burial ground, laid out in a hierarchical pattern with tumuli hosting the wealthiest families in the middle (Malnati 2003d: 41-42; Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006: 45-46).

In the 6th century BC, the period in which the upslope cult place of Caldevigo was in use, one of these family tumuli could be entered via a monumental dromos (Gambacurta 2003c: 64). This elite burial place is known by the eponymous place name (Casa di Ricovero) and situated in Via Santo Stefano (see chapter 5E). See section 4.6.2 of the previous chapter for a further mention of the spatial relationship of stipi and cemeteries in Este.



Figure 5A.9. Via Santo Stefano- Ex Casa di Ricovero. Photograph by author



Figure 5A.10. Colle del Principe looking North. Photograph by author

Background information

The first finds date back to 1887-1894, when local antiquarians recovered objects of possible votive character at the foot of Colle Del Principe (Gambacurta and Zaghetto 2002: 283). In 1936 works at a local limestone quarry churned up yet more votive objects in the lower slopes: hillwash had probably dragged the objects downhill.

Excavations took place in the 1970s and 1980s under the direction of the Museo Archeologico Atestino.

Relative chronology based on artefact dating suggested a first use of the site in the 5th century BC and throughout the 4th century BC. Later chronological phases appear to be absent from the archaeological record (Gambacurta and Zaghetto 2002: 285).

The main find types from this cult places were bronze laminae, a few figurines and cross-hatched personal ornaments/containers (*astucci*). See fig. 5A.11 for a sample of *astucci* and small laminae from this location.

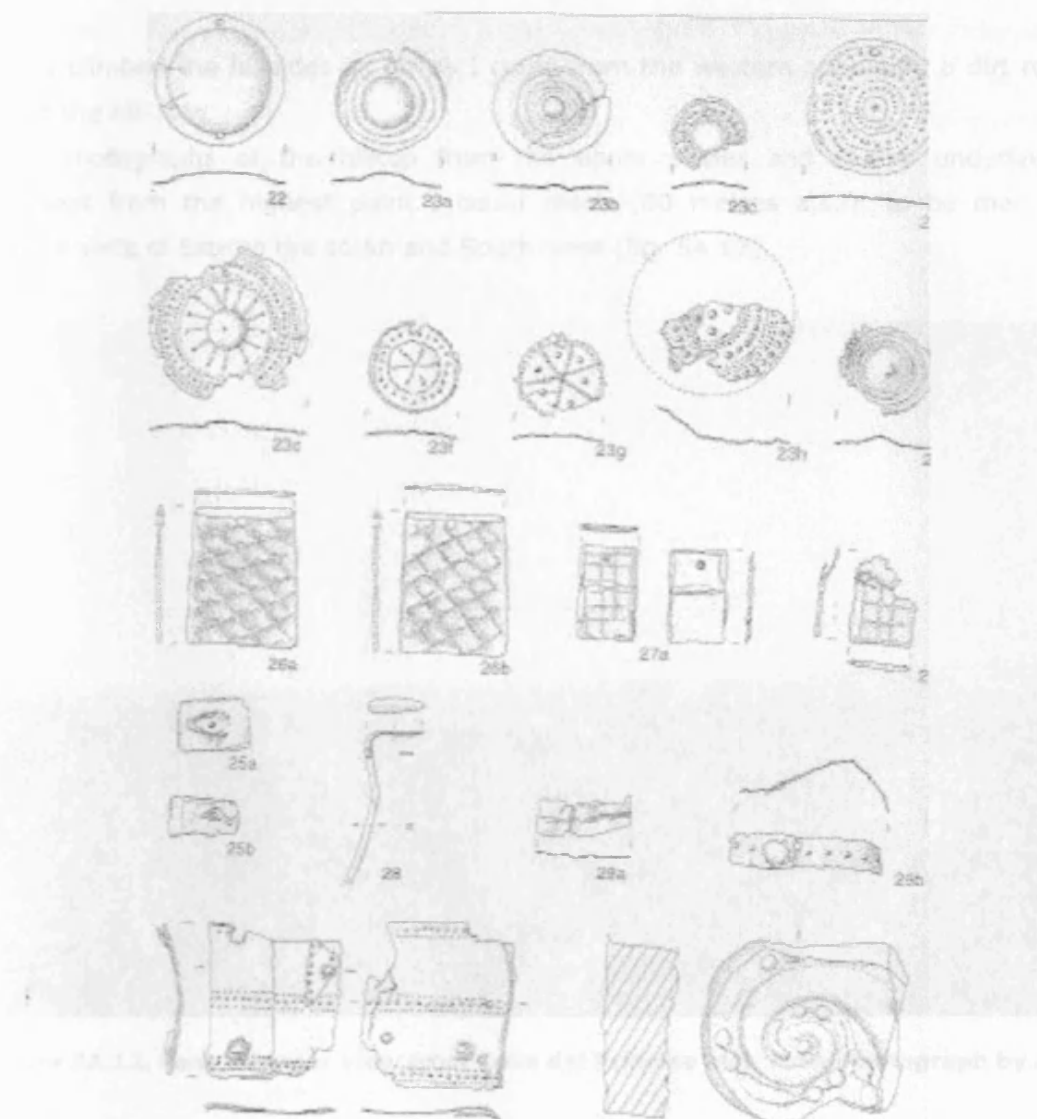


Figure 5A.11. Models of astucci and belt buckles from the Colle del Principe, Este. From Pascucci 1990

Fieldwork

I visited the site of Colle Del Principe in March 2005 and was disappointed to find that I was unable to access the very top of the hill, as the Palazzo del Principe (see below) is the private property of the owner of Cementificio Zillo (the cement works at its foot and a grim landmark in the modern scenery).

I climbed the hillsides as far as I could from the western approach, a dirt road that coils up the hill side.

I took photographs of the hilltop from the upper slopes and of the underlying Este settlement from the highest point I could reach (80 metres a.s.l), to be met with an excellent vista of Este to the south and South-west (fig. 5A.12).



Figure 5A.12. Hazy summer view from Colle del Principe over Este. Photograph by author

I took photographs to record visually my experience in the field, better to remember the experience of being on site and to ascertain the importance of positioning/visibility from a site. The objects composing the Iron Age votive deposit were found on the lower slopes of Colle del Principe. The fact that the materials were found near the foot of the hill is somewhat played down as circumstantial, but it must be borne in mind that other sites elsewhere in the Veneto yielded votives that had rolled downhill though landslides and hillwash, such as Monte Altare (40) and Col Castelir (42). Its prominence could have been very relevant to its significance as a cult place, because unlike the other Este stipi this was likely to dominate the skyline. A prominent place, probably very easy to access from the settled area of Iron Age Este at its foot, its morphology as a hill is fundamental and peculiar to its interpretation and perception in visible and navigational terms. It simply stands out in the surrounding landscape, and it would have dominated a great view over Este and the

Colli Euganei. The excellent visibility is most probably the reason why the Estensi built a fortified palace (Palazzo del Principe) on its top in 1056 (<http://www.mondimedievali.net/Castelli/Veneto/padova/este.htm>). The construction was periodically restored and marks a visible landmark in Northern Este (see map **A3** on pages 168-169).



Figure 5A.13. Another view over Este from Palazzo del Principe. Photograph by author

The top it would have dominated a view as far as Morlungo (2) to the N-NE and it would have been visible from such a locale (fig. 5A.14 viewshed).

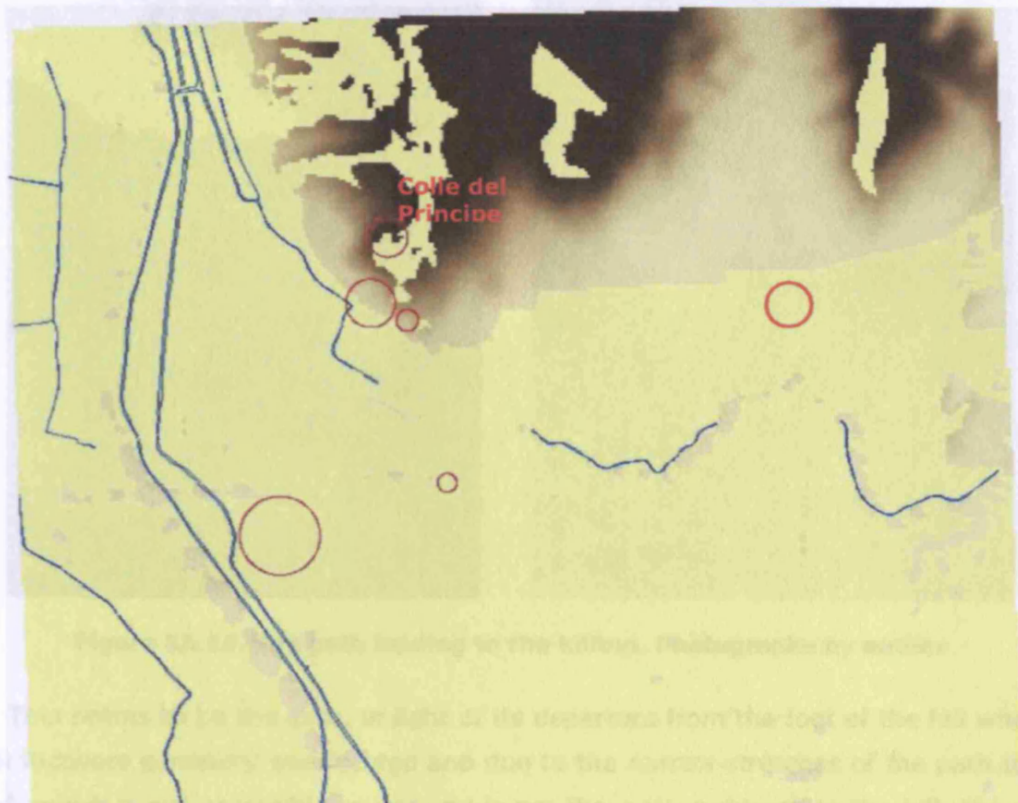


Figure 5A.14. Viewshed from Colle del Principe (7) over Este (visible area in yellow)

I followed the hill slope in the South-west direction and came across the ancestral cemetery area of Casa di Ricovero-Benvenuti at the foot of Colle del Principe: this seems to single out the Colle del Principe as a significant, ritually-imbued and multi-functional landmark on the Este skyline and geography.

In June 2006 I ascended to the top of the hill from the north side and reached the hill top; from there I carried out another assessment, georeferenced the top and filled out another fieldwork form taking into account the steep ascent, my degree of tiredness and the possibility that the path I had taken was decidedly more ancient than the road flanking the hill from the cement works.

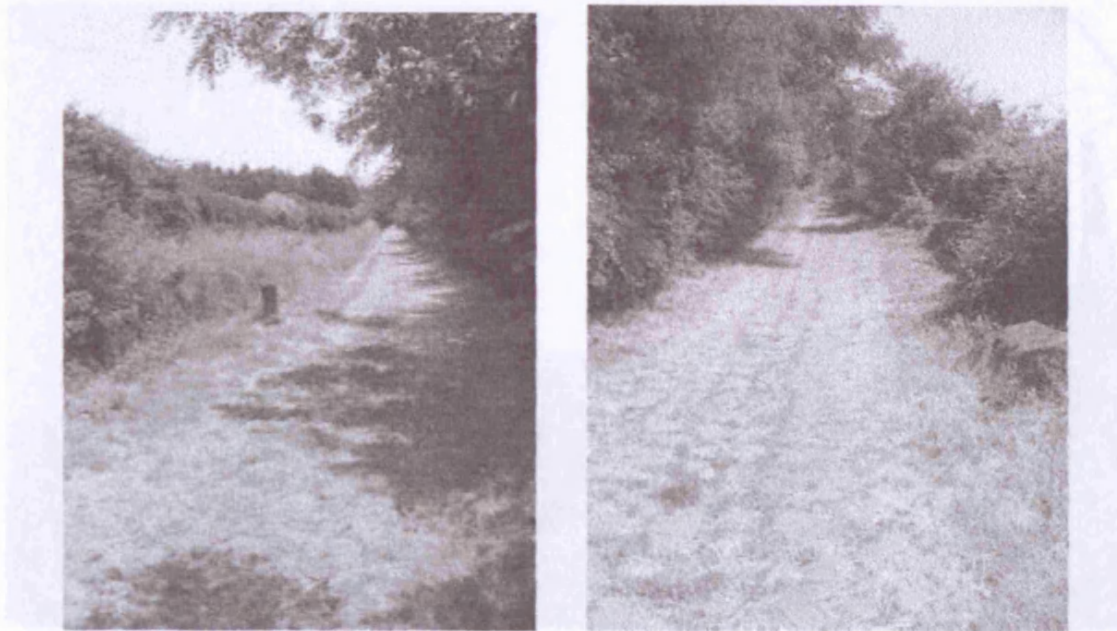


Figure 5A.15. The path leading to the hilltop. Photographs by author

This seems to be the case, in light of its departure from the foot of the hill where the Casa di Ricovero cemetery was located and due to the narrow stretches of the path towards the end, which is not accessible by car and is not the main approach to the hill- the owners of the Palazzo and local residents reach the hill and top from Via Rimembranze.

The ascent in the late afternoon is rather tiring: the sun is setting, but still mercilessly hot and the path is steeper than it looks. We wonder if there would have been trees providing shelter to pilgrims in antiquity, somewhere for them to rest momentarily during the ascent, of if rites and processions happened at night, in the darkness and secrecy of the nocturnal hours.

After visiting the top of Colle del Principe we took the other approach via the main road. I took photographs from the Via Rimembranze of the underlying panorama of Este (figs. 5A.12, 5A.16), taking into account modern vegetation cover and visibility from the road as opposed to the hill slopes.



Figure 5A.16. Sunset on Este. View from the top. Photograph by author

Then again it seems to me that in light of the positioning of the stipe in relation to the prominent place and the type of ritual performed here, the view from the shrine could have been a less significant factor than the imposing outline of the hill itself in the skyline and the narrow, winding uphill paths leading to the special place where the cults were held, which I interpret as initiation rites in light of the iconography of the cult participants (formally attired men and women, and the presence of the *astucci*, aside from the prominent positioning on Colle del Principe).





*I'm alone on this occasion.
The salty, pungent smells of iodine and sulphur
predominate over any other odour in this
unmistakable place.
The falling snow and silent solitude of the
out-of-season town lend a sense of timeless
tranquillity tinged with melancholy to my
search for the lost lake*

202.5

Monte Oliveto

10 MONTEGROTTO

0 50 100 200 metres

NORTH

P.ZZA

A4) Montegrotto Terme (10)

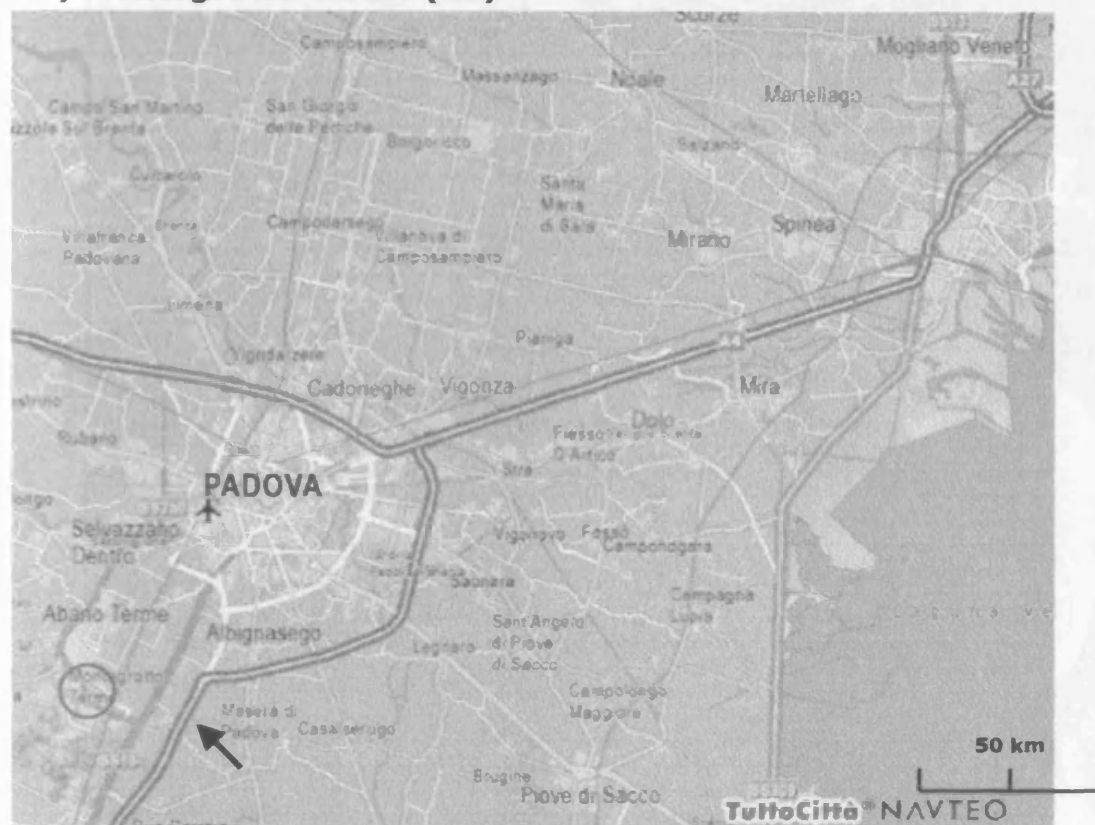


Figure 5A.17. The positioning of Montegrotto Terme (10)

Landscape context

The site of Montegrotto, formerly named San Pietro Montagnon after Colle Montagnone in the centre of the town, is located in the SW part of the Veneto Po plain (fig. 5A.17), at the core of the Colli Euganei, in fact almost at their foot. The hills (Colle Montagnone, Colle Castello, and Colle Bortolone) frame the location of a now lost thermal lake, as established by geological and archaeological deposit analyses (Dämmer 1986: 60 ff; 2002a: 300). The thermal lake would have extended from the current location of the Hotel Terme Preistoriche and Hotel Miramonti on Via Castello to Colle Castello in the west, and to the Colle Montagnone and the cemetery area with adjacent ploughed fields to the east (see fig. 5A.19).

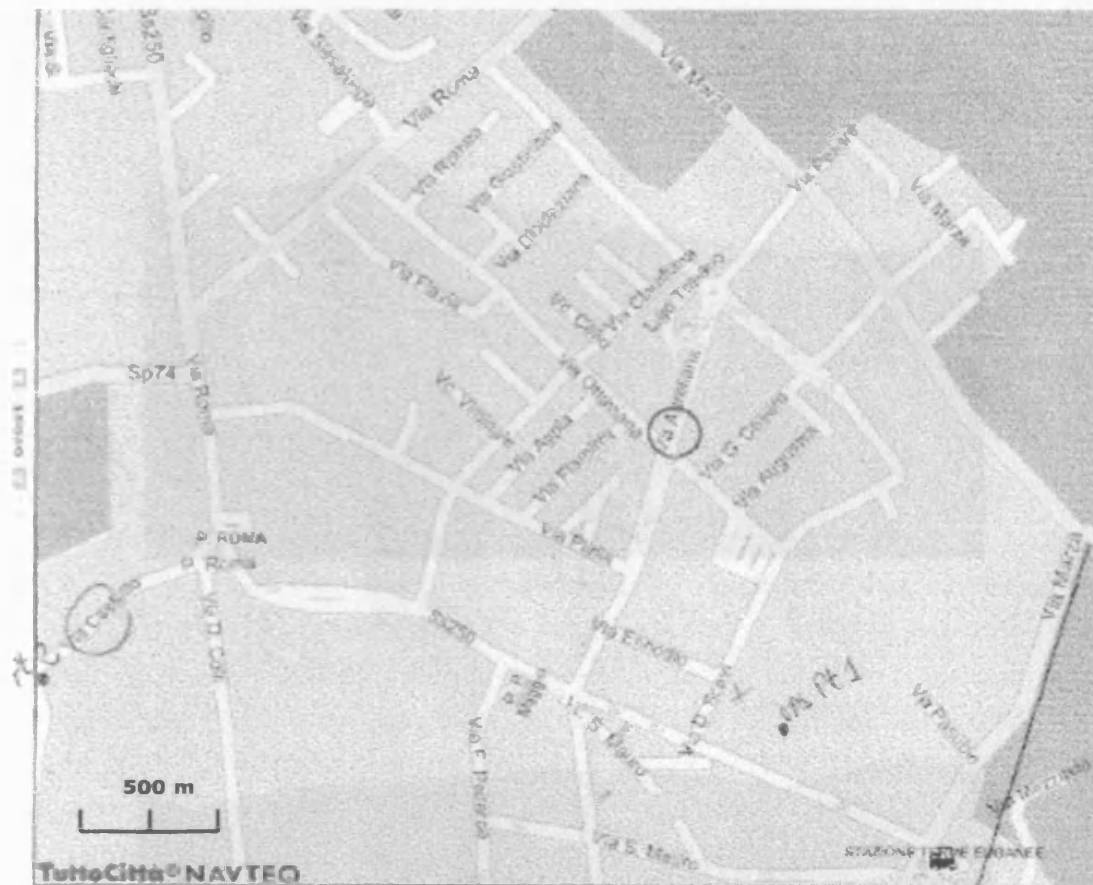


Figure 5A.18. Montegrotto Terme. GPS Point 1 marks the spot of the Roman Baths, and Point 2 the location of the Hotel Terme Preistoriche

The area would have been marshy before the reclamation works undertaken by the Romans, who established a thermal complex in an area close to, but not overlapping, the prehistoric cult place, although worship continued there until the early Imperial period (Dämmer 1986: 94).

Excavated information

One of the first archaeological excavations by local peasants took place in 1772. In 1873 the Austrian Prince of Saxe-Coburg acquired the artifacts, consisting of some 180 wheelpolished vessels and bronze objects. In 1911, Alfonso Alfieri's excavation explored the area surrounded by the Hotel Terme, the church and Hotel Montebello. The discovery of an extensive collection of the ancient wheelpolished vessels (Dämmer 2002a: 294) and the bronze brought to light some 3,500 indigenous wheelpolished vessels by the paleontologist during the studies and bottom of the lake. In addition to the grinding vessels, the excavations brought to light a number of bronze figurines representing horses (Fig. 5A.20) and a few human body parts.



Figure 5A.19. The likely location of the lake. Photographs by author

Background information

Discovery of the first votive materials by local peasants took place in 1872. In 1878 the Museo Civico of Padua acquired the artefacts, consisting of some 180 whole pottery vessels and 16 bronze objects. In 1911, Alfonso Alfonsi's excavation explored the area nowadays occupied by the Hotel Terme Preistoriche and Hotel Miramonti. The discovery of an expanse of some 2 sq km of the ancient lake basin ensued. (Dämmer 2002a: 299), and archaeologists brought to light some 3,500 miniature drinking vessels in the palaeosoils constituting the shores and bottom of the lake. In addition to the drinking vessels, the excavators brought to light a scatter of bronze figurines representing horses (fig. 5A.20) and bronze sheet human body parts.



Figure 5A.20. Horse bronzetti from Montegrotto. From Dämmer 1986

Fieldwork

I was aware that the primary reason for establishing a cult place at Montegrotto would have been the presence of the thermal lake, a landmark perceived as special and perhaps even magic by Iron Age and subsequently Roman groups in the area for the medicinal properties of its water. The fact stands that from the 8th century BC onwards, on the basis of pottery chronology the site became a major, large scale votive complex. I maintain that the medicinal properties of thermal/mineral gassy water was one of the main criteria for the selection of this place; and although the local springs are still exploited by a number of hotels and spas in the modern town, I wanted to recreate as much as possible a sense of place by exploring what it means to be there, even though the lake itself has long gone.

Montegrotto would have been relatively far from large scale settlements- Padua is 6 km to the NW, Este 15 km ca. to the S-SW. The location would have consisted of a lake and hot springs, standing out in its setting – the Euganei hills crowning it on three sides would have also stood out in these otherwise flat surroundings.

As part of my field method, I geo-referenced the likely location of the main deposit on the ancient lake shore, the magnolia tree in the east courtyard of the Hotel Terme Preistoriche, to import the location into a GIS.

I conduct fieldwork at Montegrotto on my own, to experience a more 'subjective' sense of place, and to conduct a sort of pilgrimage of my own to this once special place. I record the "sensory" impressions I get by being there alone and navigating the local topography on foot. The experience of being at this small thermal centre on Christmas Eve, nowhere as busy as Abano Terme ca. 5 km from here, begins when one strolls through its roads.

After struggling to find a train that would get me to Montegrotto- Terme Euganee in the festive period, I get there and it begins to snow: the landscape takes on a melancholy

air, incremented by the aging buildings and a general air of 'noblesse oblige', of the decline of a somewhat démodé resort. This impression dispels the further out of the centre I move, towards the fields and the Colli Euganei on the horizon. The salty, pungent smell of iodine and sulphur predominate over any other odour and make one feel in a unique, unmistakable place. Especially with closed eyes, one can experience the strength of the mixed smells of the minerals permeating the air, which would have been even stronger in prehistory when the thermal buildings did not exist and the hot springs bubbled up into the lake and in the open air.

The drinking of the pungent-smelling water (indicated by the many drinking vessels) and even the ability to bathe in the water of the lake would have enhanced, if not embodied, the religious experience of the worshippers, who gave offerings to the deity inhabiting the area throughout the Iron Age and the Roman period. Incidentally, the Romans established in Montegrotto a large scale baths complex some three hundred metres east of the prehistoric lake location, along the modern Via degli Scavi. They offered gifts to the lake deity but left this place unaltered; they chose to exploit other springs for "secular" purposes: which leads me to believe that they too felt the awe-inspiring appeal and influence of the local deity and respected the natural environment of the prehistoric shrine.

Material culture

The agricultural character of this cult place is reflected in the animal remains, likely remnants of sacrifice and indicating the selective interment of animal parts. There is a symbolic predominance of skulls (Fiore and Tagliacozzo 2002: 196), mainly of oxen, and pig and pregnant sow remains. The ritual sacrifice of sows indicates propitiatory agricultural rites, fertility rituals and rural concerns of local peoples not immediately involved in the urban reality of nearby Padua and Este (ibid.: 197): this practice is also encountered at Meggiaro (6).

My interpretation of this site takes into account its positioning, votive objects and context in the Venetic cult horizon: the liminality of the place, strategically positioned in between the sites of Este and Padua, yielding medicinal springs - type of water in abnormal form that would have captured people's imagination and inspired acts of devotion to ensure health and fertility- seems clear. Its positioning along the fringe of the Colli Euganei, the striking volcanic heights in the vast plain (fig. 5A.19 on page 182, fig. 5A.21 below and map **A4**), is another factor making this place a significant landmark in the very early days of Venetic social formations. Interestingly, despite plenty of room in other parts of the town and despite the absence of a church nearby, local townspeople decided to position their

cemetery on top of the ancient location of the lake, as if somewhat the ritual intensity permeating the once-fertile ground was still throbbing, being buried and re-emerging in past and present perception of the place: as if the special element was still remembered.

was as listed in appendix 1.



Figure 5A.21. Hillscapes: a view of the Colli Euganei from Montegrotto and the Cimitero.
Photograph by author

Figure 5B.1 - The Venetian lagoon (GoogleEarth)

Section B- sites in the Venetian lagoon and associated with rivers

The present section deals with three case studies: Lova di Campagnalupia (1), Altino La Fornace (26) and Altichiero sul Brenta (19). The numbers in brackets refer to site ID numbers as listed in appendix 1.

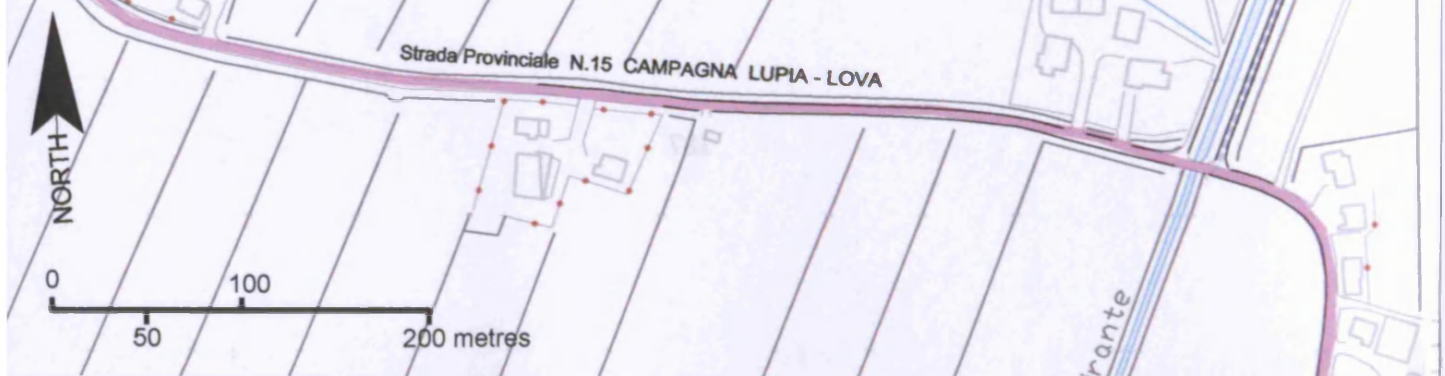


Figure 5B.1. The Venetian lagoon (GoogleEarth)

1 LOVA



The aquatic milieu of Lova was the setting of an isolated cult place dedicated to fertility & status rituals in which bronzetti & local faunal species were dedicated. The temple complex was a symbolic & actual territorial marker. Today, the locale is surrounded by fields & water, reminiscent of a world of made of lagoon, shifting land & clear skies





-1.4

Idrovora
del Cornio
(water-scooping
machine)

TAGLIO NUOVISSIMO Channel

-1.0

Via Popilia 132 B.C.

STRADA STATALE N. 309 ROMEA

Lagoon

C. TONETTO

0.5



0.0

0.7

B1) Lova di Campagnalupia (1)

Landscape context

The village of Lova is situated in the southern Venetian lagoon (fig. 5B.1), in the Southeast sector of the Veneto region (fig. 4.1) The spot corresponding to the late Venetic shrine is located in open fields adjoining the canal Cornio and its Idrovora (*draining device*). This locale was near an ancient branch of the river Brenta, flowing between Corte Disaro and the Idrovora del Cornio. Geological studies established that the local subsoil consists of marshy layers interwoven with thin alluvial deposits (Gruppo Archeologico Mino Meduaco).



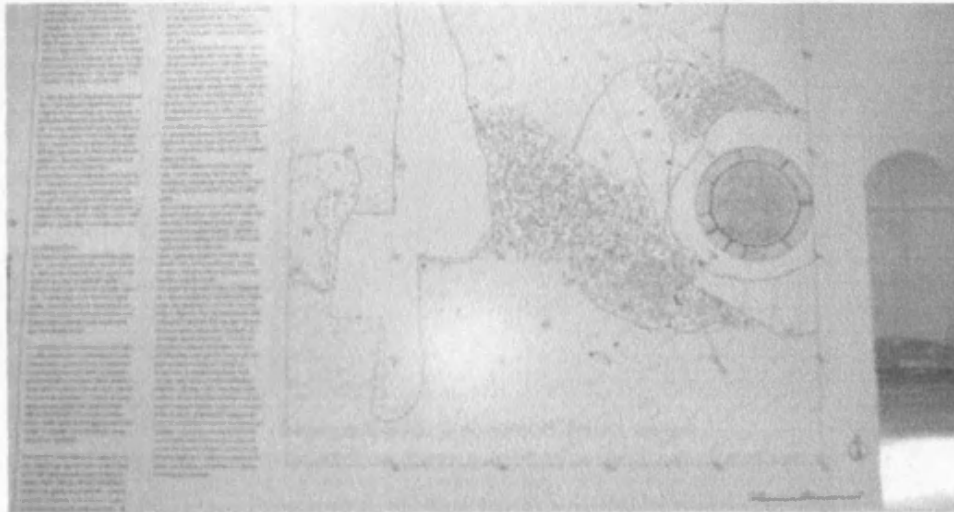
Figure 5B.2. The lagoon. Photograph by author

Background information

The site was already known by chance finds of bronzetti in the 19th century and by further surface finds in the 1980s, but only systematically excavated in 1991-1994 by the University of Venice and the Gruppo Archeologico Mino Meduaco under the direction of Simonetta Bonomi. Directly below the layers of alluvial deposits excavators unearthed the remains of a temple structure interpreted as a part of a larger votive complex dating to the Romanisation period.

Maria Grazia Caenaro of the Liceo Classico Canova in Treviso argues that the cult place was the result of the monumentalisation of an earlier 5th century Venetic shrine (*Acque e Culto delle Acque nella X Regio*, www.centrumlatinitatis.org/atti_convegni/AttiTreviso02/acqueculto.htm).

The 1993 excavation explored the area outside temple B where excavators uncovered some ninety highly stylised anthropomorphic bronze figurines. Further excavation exposed a pit or well (fig. 5B.3) used to deposit bronze and ceramic votive objects mixed with charcoal and ashes.



**Figure 5B.3. Museum panel showing the well within the plan of the sanctuary complex.
Photograph by author**

A layer of intact fluvial clay separated out two distinct deposition phases (museum information panel, Lova). Finds included bronzetti, charcoal, coins, pottery sherds, bone fragments [both charred and uncharred], sea pebbles and mollusc shell fragments. The current interpretation holds that pottery was purposefully shattered in situ: these containers might have been used in rites such as the pouring and drinking of water. The first layer was probably purposely sealed to protect the underlying votive pit (Bonomi 2001: 649-650). A second deposition had fewer pottery remains and more numerous bronzetti (figs. 5B.4 and 5B.5), again mixed with charcoal and ashes: the latter layer of deposition was also purposely sealed closed with a layer of sand.

The votive complex of Lova was deliberately dismantled in the mid 1st century BC (http://www.centrumlatinitatis.org/atti_convegni/AttiTreviso02/acqueculto.htm).

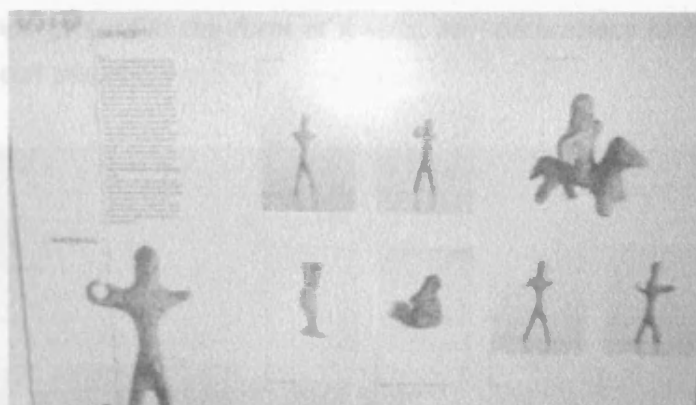


Figure 5B.4. Bronzetti from Lova



Figure 5B.5. More bronzetti from Lova. Photographs by author

Fieldwork

The location can be reached on foot: it consists of an open landscape of cereal fields (figs. 5B.4, 5B.5), the torrent, the *idrovara* and a house, the residence of a senior member of the Gruppo Archeologico Meduaco who was very helpful in indicating the various parts of the site, unfortunately concealed by crop growth. The fields in which the temple complex was found are extensively cultivated, making fieldwalking impossible. The very existence of cultivation bears witness to the extensive work of reclamation undertaken by the Romans first, and then by the Serenissima Repubblica Veneziana in this area.

There is little trace of sea and water now apart from the Cornio torrent, a tributary of the river Brenta; the only residue of the aquatic past of the region lies in the vague iodine, marshy scent in the air that reminds one of the aquatic character of the area, and the

marine remains underground in the form of fossils, and dedications to the local deity during the lifetime of the cult place.



Figure 5B.6. The modern landscape of Lova



Figure 5B.7. The sanctuary area. Photographs by author

The landscape has dramatically changed with time and the Brenta has altered its course (Bonomi 2001: 246). The shoreline shift and the rise and fall of tides were of essential significance to the location where the sanctuary was located.

To ascertain the significance of the cult place in its specific setting I assessed the nature of the archaeological evidence and put it in context.

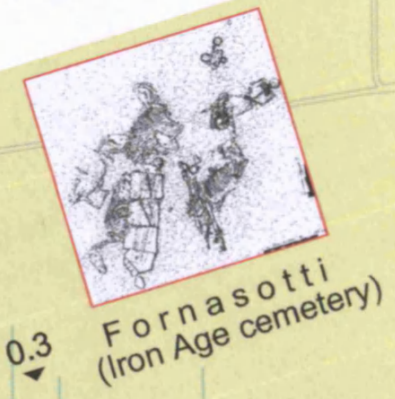
Material culture

The selection of mollusc shells and marine pebbles as votives is interesting: the shellfish could reflect a selective choice of items to dedicate to the local deity, being perceived as the fruit of the local environment, the fruit of the water and the sea, or else the remains of ritual meals, or both.

The dedication of the bronzetti, of a typology not encountered anywhere else, seems to indicate an individual, place-specific cult (Museum Panel). Caenaro's theory of a previous cult place with typically Venetic connotations that was monumentalised when Rome took charge of the lagoon area is interesting, although it is not clear on what evidence she infers the existence of an organised cult place underlying the later monumental complex (ibidem; http://www.centrumlatinitatis.org/atti_convegna/AttiTreviso02/acqueculto.htm).

There was no nearby settlement, which might qualify Lova as a rural, if not a regional, collective cult location visited by a number of local groups rather than a shrine established by one particular community. Seeing that there was no known community or settlement that established this cult place, the reasons it was located in the middle of the Southern lagoon might lie in its positioning, local landscape morphology and the presence of the river Brenta.

It might have been a territorial cult place, but one very much inserted in the local economy and lifestyle: the choice of local produce- aquatic birds, sea pebbles, molluscs and the production of local pottery in situ could be consistent with the late chronology of the site, established when Romanisation was at its peak. It could have been a way for the locals to lay a symbolic claim to their land and the territorial identity of the lagoon, and their roots.



0.3 Fornasotti (Iron Age cemetery)

Roman settlement

BELGIARDINO

Via Annia



Visiting Altino on a late winter day, the air smells of lagoon and marshy water, so strong it's almost heady. The smell of the sea is even stronger on the canal's edge (S. Maria). This is where the cult place of La Fornace would have been

Canale di S. Maria



Fiume DESE



26 ALTINO - La Fornace

Museo di Altino

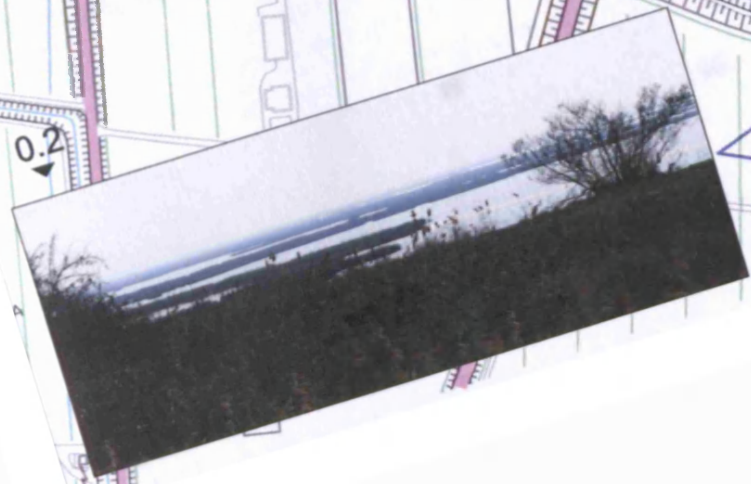
SCUOLA

Roman settlement



La Fornace

Strada Satale N. 14



CA MONTIRON

B2) Altino La Fornace (26)

Landscape context

The second case study illustrated in this section also belongs to the lagoon milieu, although we are now at the other end of the *Laguna di Venezia*. The locale known as "La Fornace" is situated in the northern Venetian lagoon hinterland (fig. 5B.1). It was situated in a suburban position to the South-east of the main settlement nucleus of Altino, founded in the 6th century BC, that it predated by several centuries. The location would have been no more than 1.5 kilometres from the outer lagoon to the South/ SE.

The local topography, as recently reconstructed by Balista and others, appears to be made up of a series of *dossi*, sandy raised banks or island-like land masses floating in the surrounding marshy watery milieu (Tirelli and Cipriano 2001: 38 ff.).

The sacred area was surrounded by a system of intersecting canals (figs. 5B9-10) - the Santa Maria, the Zero and the Sioncello.



Figure 5B.8. The layout of the Altino archaeological area. La Fornace is circled in red



Figure 5B.9. The Santa Maria canal



Figure 5B.10. The Sioncello canal. Photographs by author

Background information

The site was excavated in recent years using modern excavation techniques, which brought to light one of the most complex and possibly the oldest Venetic cult places to date; the site

is still being studied at the time of writing. The discovery of a feature (possibly a pit) dated to the earliest phase of use of the shrine, in the 11th century BC, is a unique occurrence in the panorama of Venetic cult places.

La Fornace has been interpreted as a sanctuary with commercial, political and diplomatic functions (an *emporium*), as it yielded a wealth of votive objects from Etruscan-Italic bronzetti (fig. 5B.14 below) to fine Greek pottery and horse remains pertaining to sacrificial practices (Tirelli& Cipriano 2001: 44 ff.; Tirelli 2002).

According to new finds, the chronology of the cult place seems to start in the 11th or 10th century BC and continue until the mid Imperial period, when the sanctuary was abandoned, but with occasional intermittent use throughout Late Antiquity (Museo di Altino information panel).

My historic research revealed that Romanisation was not the last time of change and turmoil in these parts, and that the Northern lagoon witnessed intense and frequent passages of people following the barbaric invasions, leading among the other things to the foundation of Venice. Inhabitants of Altino were forced out of their land in the centuries 5th to 7th AD following hostile incursions by Huns, Visigoths, Ostrogoths and Longobards (Rosso 1983: 19; Piva 1938; Bratti 1955; Pedrocco & Salvadori 1973; Carile and Fedato 1978). They moved to islands in the northern lagoon, some of which (Ammiana and Costanziaco) disappeared and were swallowed up by the lagoon. They also colonised the Northern Adriatic coast further East, originating the settlement of Eraclea Veneta. Antonio Rosso's fascinating account of a Venetian islandscape being gradually abandoned and disappearing under water after centuries of inhabitation and human activity makes me wonder about other potentially lost dwelling places in the volatile lagoon environment, perhaps even the homeland of the worshippers of Lova (1) (<http://www.archeosub.it/articoli/laguna/costanz.htm>).



Figure 5B.11. Bernardo Trevisan's map of the Northern lagoon. From Rosso 1983

If two major groups of Venetian islands sunk in the Middle Ages leaving behind sizeable churches and monasteries (Rosso 1983: 21 *ff.*) - in the case of Costanziaco, a group of four islands located off the coast of Altino, with their six churches, splendid and imposing buildings, dwellings and houses, buried desolately at the bottom of the lagoon - were only recently explored by underwater archaeologists, who knows how many Iron Age centres may be hiding under the sea (Rosso 1983: 29).

Fieldwork

Upon visiting Altino on a late winter day, the air smells of lagoon and marshy water, so strong it's almost heady. The smell of the sea is even stronger on the canal edge (Santa Maria). This is where the cult place of La Fornace would have been, and scholars accept that the Santa Maria canal existed in its current location during the period of use of the site as a shrine (Tirelli and Cipriano 2001, Tirelli 2002).

The shrine area, located by excavation, would have been in full view from the canals and settlement surrounding it.



Figure 5B.12. The lagoon near La Fornace. Photograph by author

The discovery of such an early, long-lived and elaborately structured cult place seems to indicate an ancestral cult, that later became associated with commercial and diplomatic aspects and with the fertility and liminality of the land. La Fornace was certainly already meaningful long before the lagoon dwellers founded the Iron Age settlement.

The recovery of what looked to the excavators like a *walkway*, a path along the South side of the shrine structure, underlying a similar walkway dating from the Republican period, suggests a spatially-planned layout of the cult place, divided perhaps into activity areas and approached and navigated by processions of worshippers (Tirelli 2002: 312; Tirelli and Cipriano 2001: 42), perhaps with the purpose of creating approaches and granting access to different parts in a pre-ordained sequence. The processional element, with its performance and spatial character is also portrayed in the many laminae depicting rows of both male and

female worshippers, clothed or unclothed, engaged in a variety of activities from boxing to military parading (Tirelli 2002: 314).

The symbolism of the isolated 'island' surrounded by canals is apparent, if indeed the centre of the cult place was here (fig. 5B.13). It would have been the first location visible when the area was reached by water from the outer lagoon and the sea (Tirelli and Cipriano 2001: 45). Its location on an islet would have suggested a sense of belonging to the land and also evoked the mystic meeting of water and earth (the lagoon is a liminal⁷ place).

Moreover the place would have been intervisible with the *dosso* of Canevere, prior to the construction of the road and the buildings separating them: I ascertained this fact in the field. The relationship between these two cult places at the fringes of the settlement of Altino and the Brustolade and Albertini cemeteries is still uncertain. It is also interesting to note how the votive deposit of Canevere was relatively short lived: its use, judging by the artifacts and architectural remains associated with it seems to be limited to the 5th and 4th centuries BC, whereas La Fornace was already used in the LBA and preserved as a cult place until the Roman period, but still sporadically visited in Late Antiquity.



Figure 5B.13. The excavation area. Photograph by author

Material culture

The offering of aquatic birds and molluscs seems to reinforce the awareness of the environment and its sacred as well as secular potential, its involvement in the cult practices.

⁷ Geographically liminal

The recovery of a fish hook in a ritual pit, alongside other functional metal objects such as hooks and knives and specifically cult objects such as bronze laminae, seems to reinforce the watery context of this cult place.

The emporic, international, en route character of the shrine of La Fornace seems one of its predominant traits, similarly to a very different yet equally important and boundary cult place such as Lagole di Calalzo (45) in the Alps. Nonetheless the local, land-related element is very strong at both "boundary" shrines⁸, and is reflected in the sacrifice of horses and aquatic species, but also in the dedication of local grey ware (Tirelli Cipriano 2001: 46 ff.) in Altino and in the consumption of mineral water from the local springs in Lagole. Interestingly, the horse is also a recurrent element in Lagole, appearing on a dozen of so called *ox hide laminae*. Horse figurines were dedicated at another possible territorial shrine, that of Montegrotto (10), creating an intriguing link between territorial identity, group interaction and horses as prestige symbol.

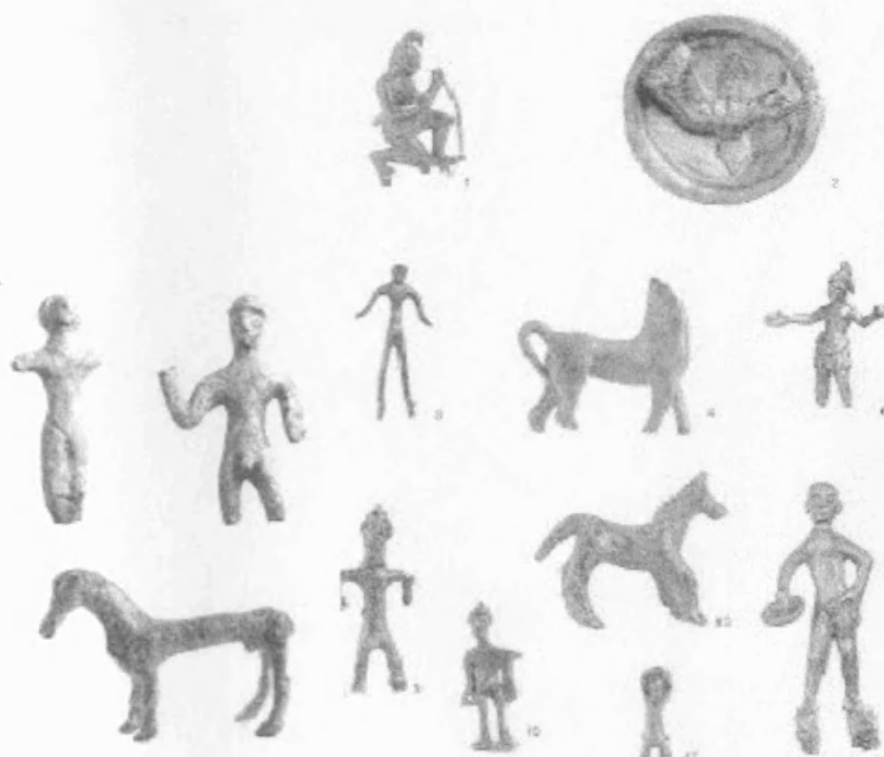
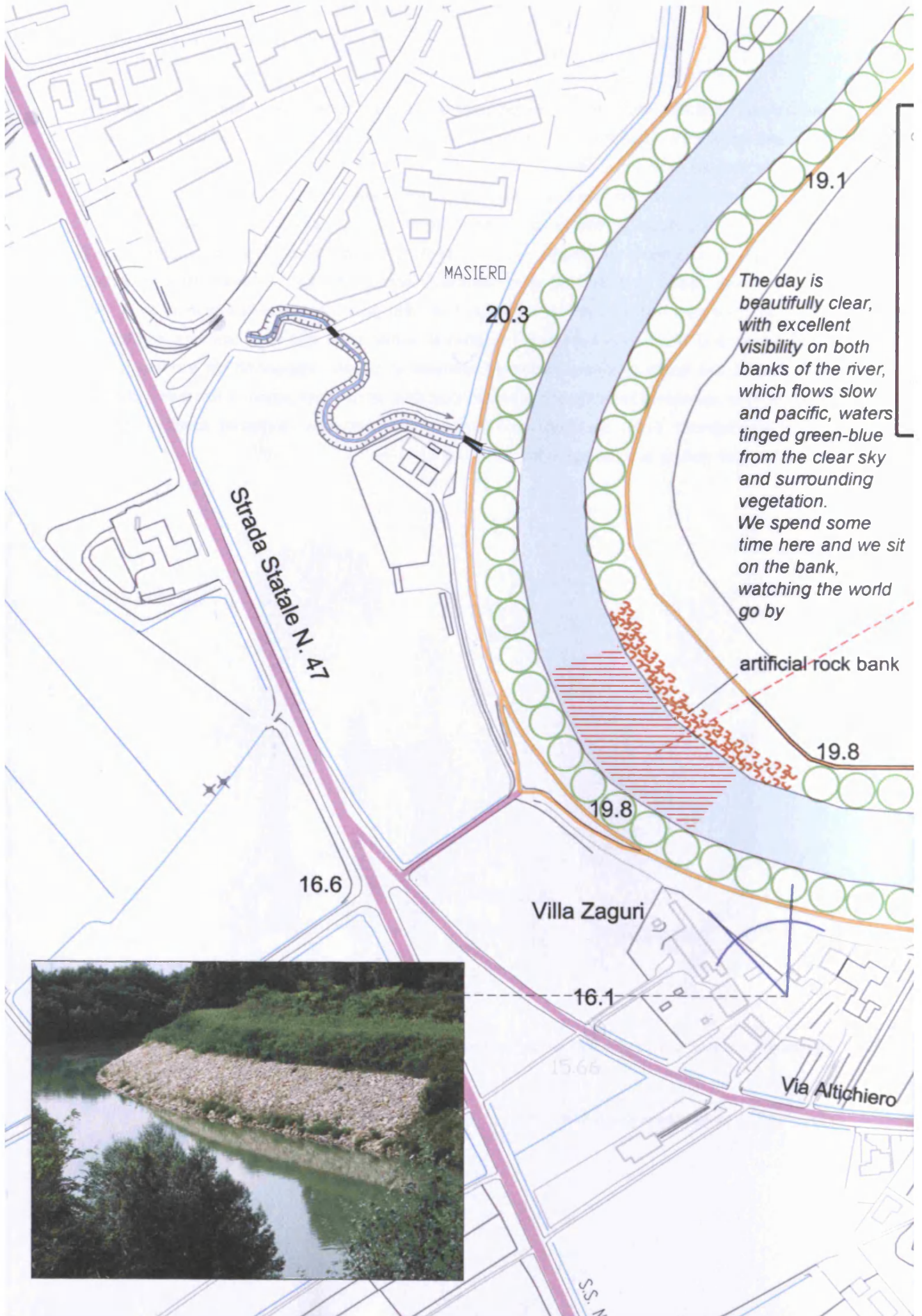


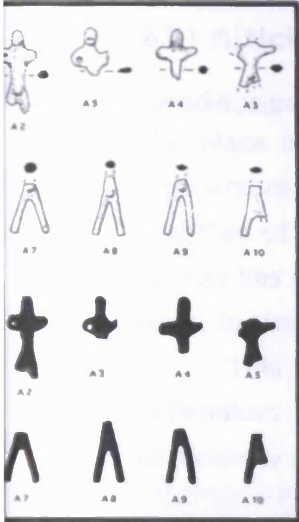
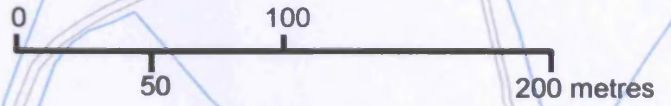
Figure 5B.14. Bronzetti from Altino La Fornace. From Tirelli 2002 in Ruta Serafini 2002 (ed.)

⁸ In both topographical and political terms



20

ALTICHIERO



15.8

Villa Zigno-Pisani-Altichiero

19.0

River BRENTA

19.7

14.9

meadow



VILLA
COLPI

B3) Altichiero sul Brenta (19)

Landscape context

The place of recovery of the votive objects lies to the South of the modern Comune of Vigodarzere. **Please note that the author made an error in locating the correct position of the Altichiero site** (fig. 5B.15). The stretch of river that yielded archaeological objects lies west of the railway bridge and has a raised bank that dates at least to the Middle Ages. In the Iron Age the river bank would not have been raised like it is today.

This stretch of the Brenta was confirmed as already in situ at the start of the 1st millennium BC (Leonardi and Zaghetto 1993; Zaghetto and Zambotto 2005), making it particularly suitable for landscape and phenomenological appraisals.

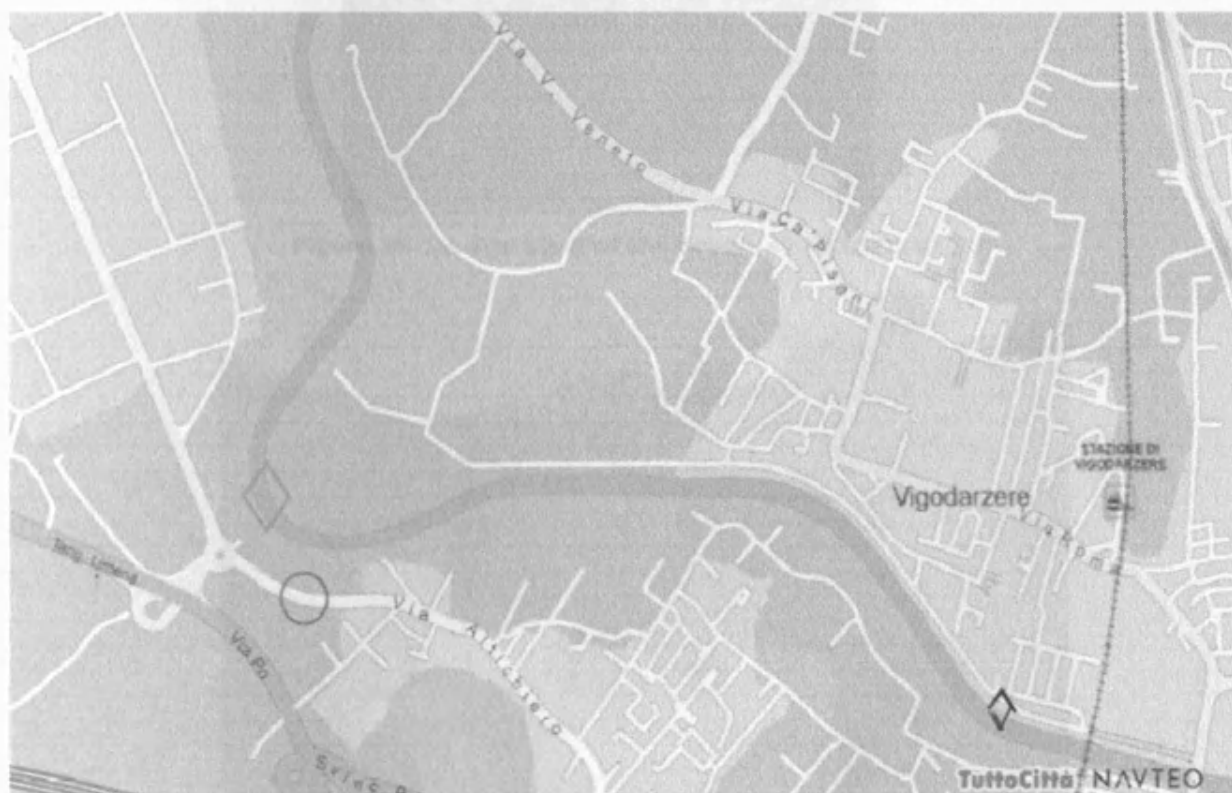


Figure 5B.15. The location of the Altichiero stipe (20)



Figure 5B.16. The bank of the Brenta at Altichiero



Figure 5B.17. The Brenta at Altichiero. Photographs by author

Background information

A local divers' club reported the find of a substantial number of objects on the river bed. Following these chance finds, a palaeo-environmental analysis ascertained the prehistoric origins of this stretch of the Brenta, in the light of C14 data from the tree stumps at the bottom of the river, encased in a clay bank where the finds were recovered (Zaghetto and Zambotto 2005: 45 ff.).

The material, that covers a time span from the Early Bronze Age to the 15th century AD, displays varied wear patterns caused by currents and friction with the river bed; an especially low extent of corrosion is detected on metalwork that was attributed to cult purposes: namely iron and bronze objects, from weapons to fibulae, from bronzetti to personal ornaments and coins (Gambacurta 1999b: 180; Zaghetto and Zambotto: 46 ff.) (fig. 5B.18).

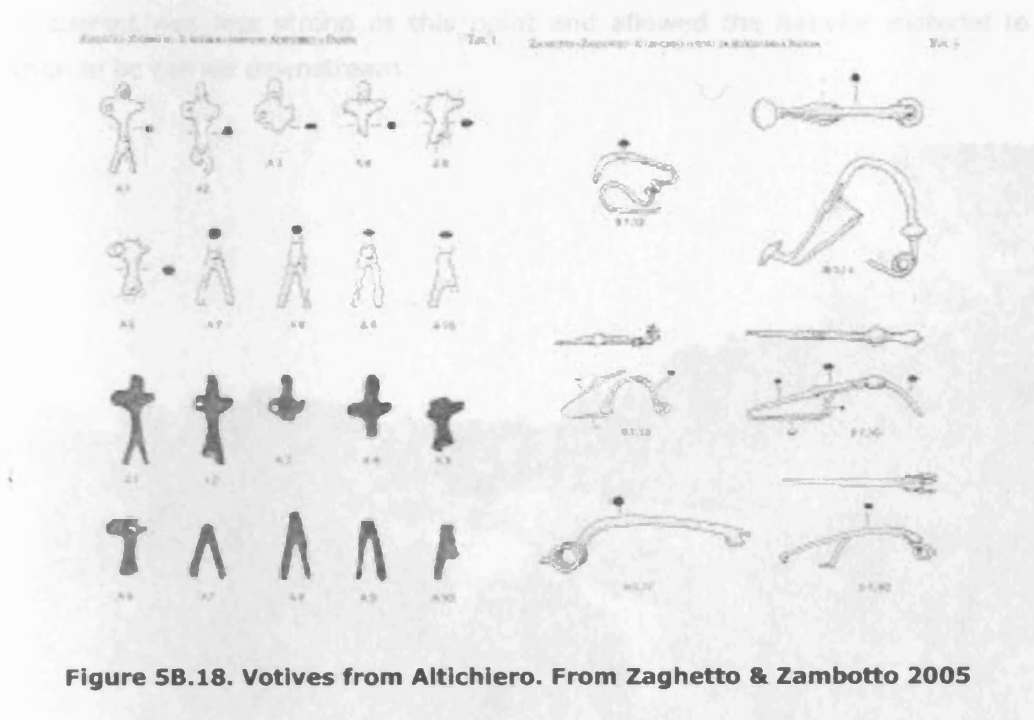


Figure 5B.18. Votives from Altichiero. From Zaghetto & Zambotto 2005

The wear pattern, the positioning of the waterlogged deposit on a river bend and hydrological studies led excavators Leonardi and Zaghetto and geoarchaeologist Balista to the conclusion that the objects had originally been deposited on the river bank and dragged into the river by alveolar movements (Zaghetto and Zambotto 2005: 45).

Fieldwork

At the time of my fieldwork in August 2005, the exhaustive piece on Altichiero in "Stipi Votive delle Venezie" (Zaghetto and Zambotto 2005) had not been published: therefore I followed the more vague indications provided in the Quaderni di Archeologia Veneta (Leonardi and Zaghetto 1993) to locate the precise spot and managed to do so after asking local people the whereabouts of the only landmark I could use to locate the site, ex Ca' Pisani (or Villa Pisani as it turned out to be).

I surveyed the area extensively and geo-referenced various points along the bank for my database.

The purpose of my investigation was to establish why this particular spot was selected for the deposition of special, often deliberately de-functionalised items in the river. The fact that the find spot corresponded to a river bend (fig. 5B.19) could be due to the fact that the current was less strong at this point and allowed the heavier material to settle rather than to be carried downstream.



Figure 5B. 19. The river bend corresponding to the Altichiero deposit. Photograph by author

Moreover, the very fact that it was a bend of the river could have held some symbolic significance. Interestingly, any other river bend could have been selected, but this was singled out. It occurred to me that this was because this locale was rather close to the contemporary Iron Age votive deposits of Mortise (21) and Mandriola (22), both suburban localities a few km north of Padua; the Altichiero-Vigodarzere stretch of the Brenta in question was situated 5 km W of the Mortise cult place and ca. 3 km north of Mandriola, thus representing the vortex of an imaginary triangle of suburban sacred places connected with the inhabitants of Padua (fig. 5B.20).

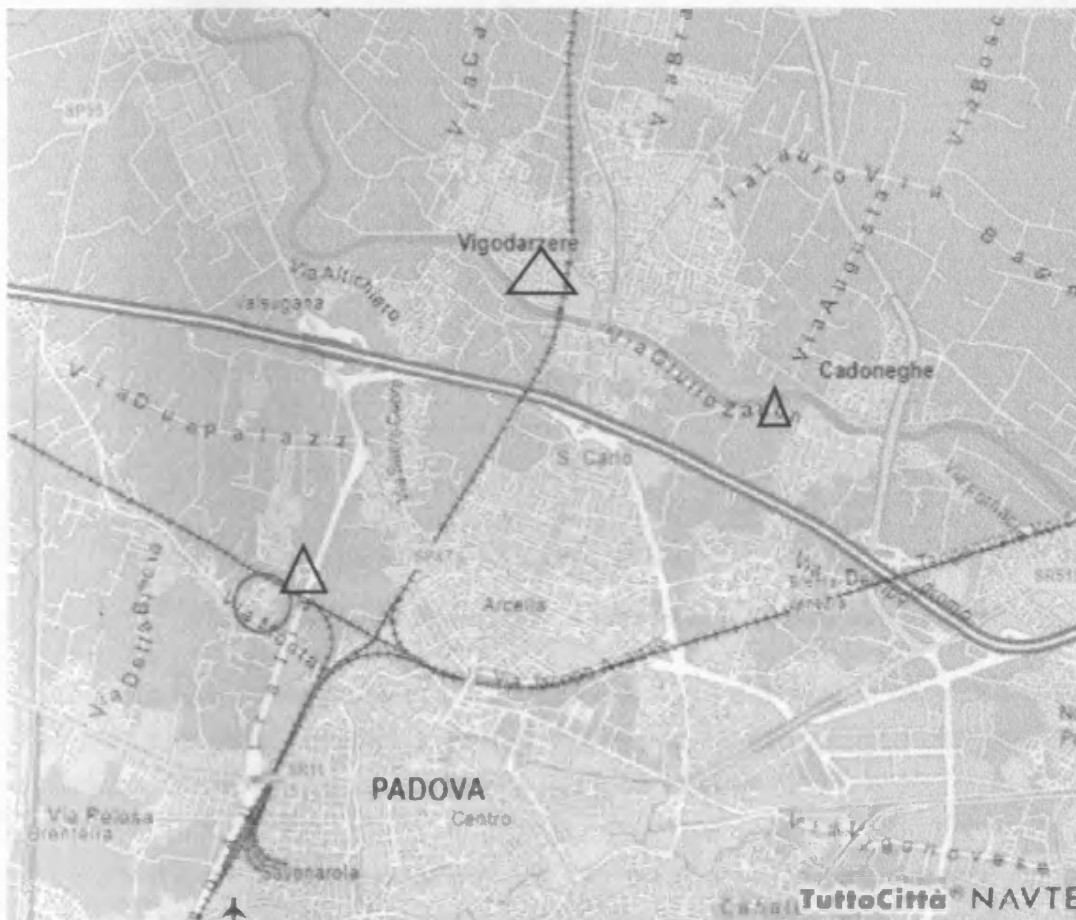


Figure 5B.20. The symbolic triangle of cult places North of Padua

It is not infrequent that proto-urban or urban centres in the Veneto would have their own "crown" of satellite shrines or votive deposits: a good example is Este with its northern, eastern, SW and SE cult places.

The cult elements found at these peripheral locations were different from those encountered at sites closer to settlements (Pozzo Dipinto, San Daniele) and those that were not only part of the urban fabric, but also part of dwellings such as the "domestic" stips of ex-Pilsen, Via Battisti, Piazza Cavour and Piazza Castello in Padua (11-17).

I conducted preliminary fieldwork in Via Baracchini (fig. 5B.21) (the find spot of the Mortise votives) and established that it would not have been as much of a significant locale per se if not contextualised in a network of local sacred places that guarded the northern approach to the city and marked the point of exit into the countryside.



Figure 5B.21. Via Baracchini- Mortise (21). Photograph by author

Taking into account the modified bank location and any subsequent changes in vegetation -I was unable to gather exhaustive data in this respect- I attempted to explore the locale and experience the sense of place intrinsic to this river location.

It is a most pleasant place to be: the number of walkers, joggers and cyclists we encounter along the way on an early spring Sunday is remarkable, and an indication that people are attracted to this place, enjoy strolling or cycling along the banks.

The establishment of a Venetian villa very close to the location of the archaeological finds also indicates that the place was considered somewhat prominent and that this stretch of the river was good for transport and accessibility by boat. It is not known whether either the prehistoric people or the Romans inhabiting the area used the Brenta as a means of

communication and transport of goods, but it seems likely. The essence of the river as symbolic and actual boundary was, then, a most likely factor for the selection of this locale.

Material culture

I acknowledge the predominant theory arguing that the votive objects were originally deposited on the bank, but would like to leave open the possibility that they could have been deposited in the water very near the bank and left to sink, due to the relatively low amount of wear on bronze artefacts and sherds and the absence of hooks or holes for the purpose of appending or displaying the objects, of the kind encountered at other shrines in the South and North Veneto but that are absent, interestingly, at another aquatic cult place, Montegrotto Terme (10), see previous section. Moreover, the particular type of votive objects deposited at Altichiero, with the exception of the handful of bronzetti, leads me to interpret this cult place as a single-donation or small-scale donation location: personal ornaments and weapons tend to be individual gifts to the gods as opposed to bronzetti, laminae and drinking vessels.

I already stressed the importance of water and the liminality of rivers as a political and symbolic boundary in my discussion of Este Morlunco (2) in the previous section, and will restate here that the significance, or at any rate part of the significance of this cult place is rooted in its place in nature and the strong symbolism of passage, of crossing over to another physical or symbolic entity or place.

Section C. Sites in the piedmont (provinces of Treviso and Vicenza)

This section will describe fieldwork conducted at five sites in the Veneto piedmont, of which four are in its Northeastern sector (in the province of Treviso) and one in the North-west end (the cave of Bocca Lorenza on Monte Summano, Santorso, in the province of Vicenza).

I will attempt to identify similarities and idiosyncrasies in the landscape settings of the sites, and in relation to each other, especially in the case of the first four sites, to detect local patterns and perceived criteria in locale positioning. Interestingly, none of the sites discussed in the present chapter has strong links, whether spatial or cultural, with any specific settlement sites, and as such they are predominantly "rural" locations.

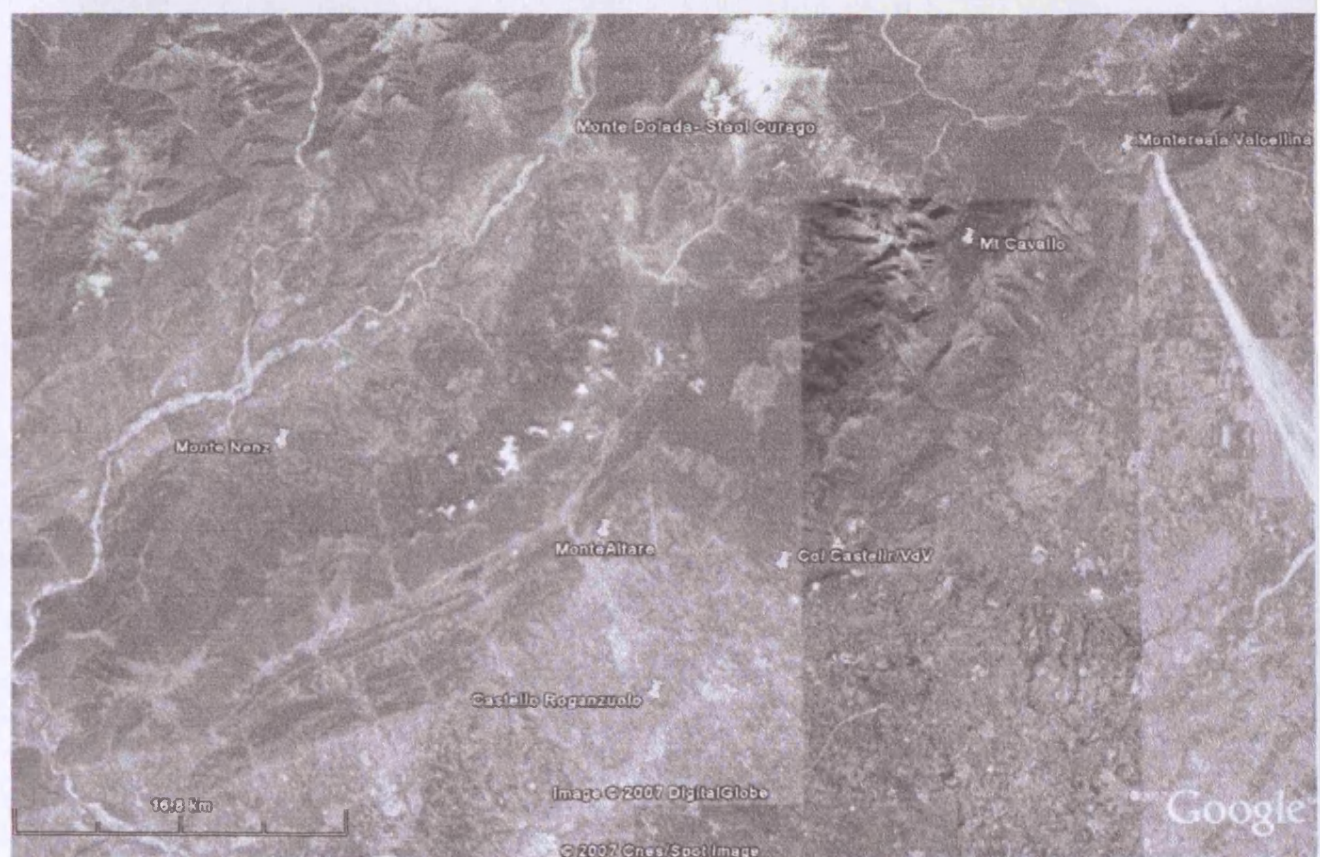


Figure 5C.1. GoogleEarth image of the NE Treviso piedmont

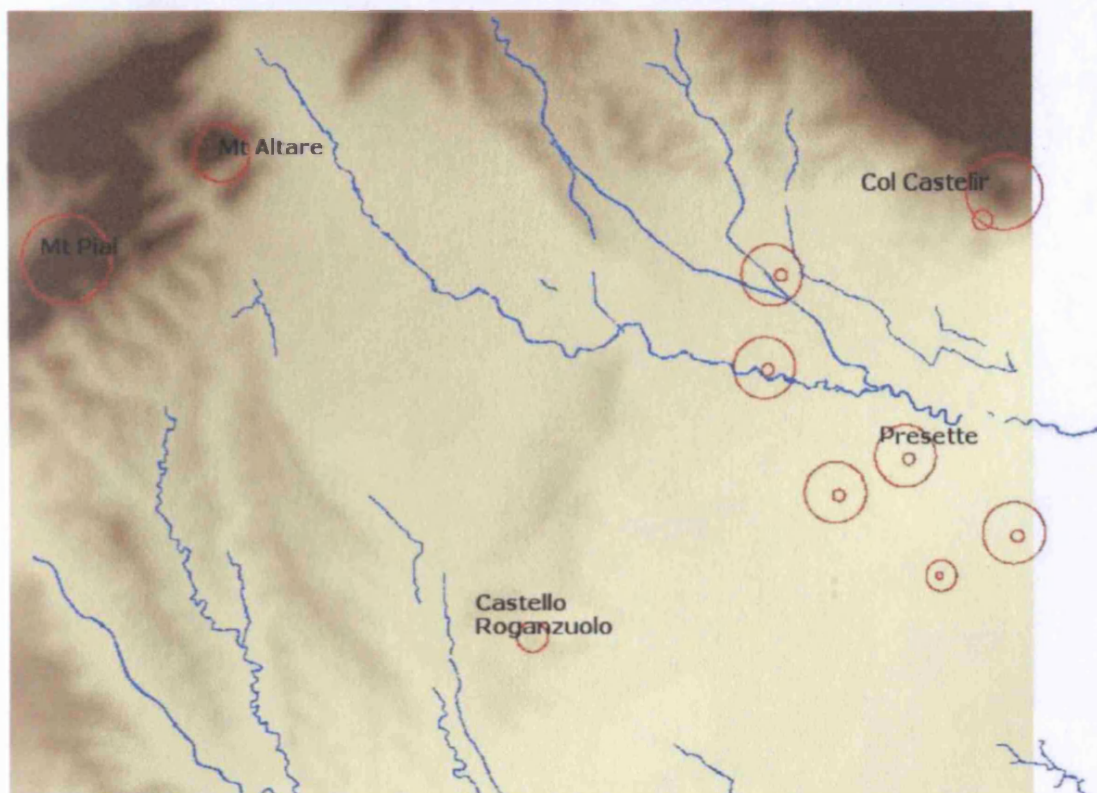
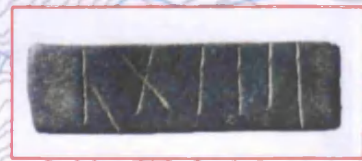
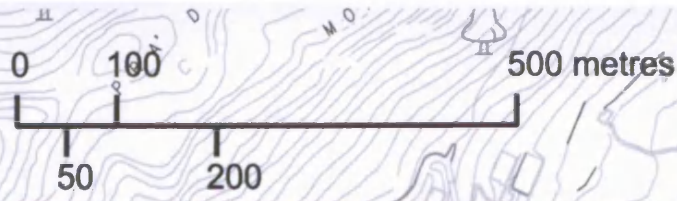


Figure 5C.2. Digital Elevation Model of the NE piedmont

VITTORIO VENETO



In the Iron Age people worshipped this sacred place, filling the upmost peak of the hill with glittering offerings of bronze and gold. It was special, and the rugged top may have been perceived as the seat of the deity.

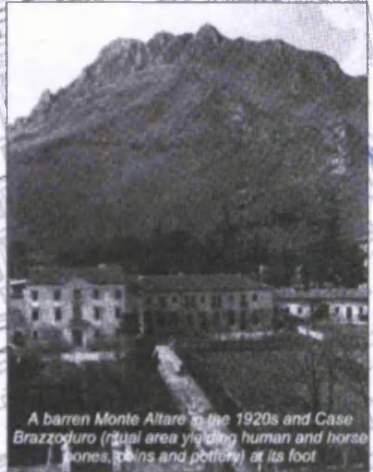
In the 18th century, official maps name this hill 'Monte de Altare', an ante-litteram reference to a hill that would be selected to bear the remembrance cross to those fallen in WW1. Was the hill already (or still?) perceived as holy, and why?

Colum Maledictum... in the Middle Ages people feared this place. It penetrated local imaginations with details of forbidden and endless acts, and popularised sinister tales, filling superstitious minds with fear and aversion.

In the Roman period, locals worshipped the sacred hill, aware of its long history of specialness. They gave offerings of coins to the deity and gifts to the oracle, who drew their lots by casting sortes, reading their future in numbers. People brought their expectations and hopes to this sacred hilltop.

The sun over the top and slopes highlights the isolation and loftiness of the hill, sunshine makes the landscape look mellow and non-menacing.

The spring on Pra Liss... an evocative location, beautified by shadows cast by the thick foliage and the murmur of water bubbling to the surface



A barren Monte Altare in the 1920s and Case Brazzoduro (rural area yielding human and horse bones, coins and pottery) at its foot



Monte Altare

Colum Maledictum

San Gottardo



Case Brazzoduro

Salsa

San Giovanni

Pra Liss

The hill consists of five rounded peaks and a long and narrow top covering a surface of 50 sq

C1) Monte Altare (40)

Landscape context

Monte Altare (figs. 5C.3, 5C.4) is a hill rising to 450 metres a.s.l. located near Vittorio Veneto in the North-eastern piedmont (fig. 5C.1 above). The local landscape consists of hilly topography of moderate-height hills and hillocks and low ridges. The area comprising the Monte Altare borders to the north with the Val Lapisina, a post-glacial valley linking the piedmont with the subalpine and alpine areas of the Alpago and Cadore respectively. The hill was located on a likely transhumance route going from the SW plains (Oderzo) to the Cadore in the north along the Val Lapisina and the Fadalto valley from the Bronze Age to the modern era (Arnosti 1996a: 94; Gorini- Gambacurta 2005) based on archaeological traces found throughout that route: Bronze Age artefacts and materials, pertaining to seasonal or short-lived settlements scattered at a number of sites along the way seems to indicate an itinerary...



Figure 5C.3. Monte Altare. Courtesy of the GAC

A spring line runs from Case Posocòn to the district of Salsa along the foot of the hill. To the south the hill borders with the plain containing the quarter of Ceneda (see map **C1**), the site of the Roman municipium of Cenita, almost certainly overlying an earlier Venetic settlement and the area of the Iron Age cemetery of "I Frati" and the Roman cemetery of Via Malanotti. Along the I Palasi side of the hill slopes Iron Age settlement nuclei were found (Arnosti 1990: 10; Arnosti 1993: 7).

The hill consists of five rugged peaks and a long and narrow top covering a surface of 50 sq. m on the tallest peak (fig. 5C.6).



Figure 5C.4. The rugged peaks of Monte Altare. Photograph by G Arnosti



Figure 5C.5. Monte Altare in an antique photograph by Giulio Marino

The stratigraphy of the site is compromised by the eroding action of water (the hill has fifteen springs, most of which are now dry) and by centuries of exploitation as pastureland and use as a shooting ground in the 1920s and 1930s.

Active springs are "Sorgenti Posocòn", "Sorgenti Colletti" or "Coletti" and "Sorgenti via Labbi", according to geologists Dal Piaz and Della Libera (Dal Piaz pers. comm.) these are on the West slope of the hill in the localities of Tremeacque and Val Sian (see map C1).



Figure 5C.6. The hill top. Photograph by the GAC

Background information

Medieval diocese records show that local people perceived the hill as a negative entity: the recovery of "pagan" objects had gained the hill the nickname of *Colum Maledictum*, "Cursed Hill" as early as 1398, and early 19th century maps display two churches (oratori), now lost, dedicated to Santa Elisabetta and San Giovanni, in the saddle on the upper slopes, the 'Post castrum' (map C1) (Arnosti 1990: 6; Sergio De Nardi pers. comm.). This locale was still meaningful, for very different reasons than those that made it special until the Roman period, and striking and talked about. The incriminating objects were ithyphallic bronzetti, portraying nude males with pronounced phalli, usually holding out the right arm as if to clutch a sceptre or spear (figs. 5C.7, 5C.8).

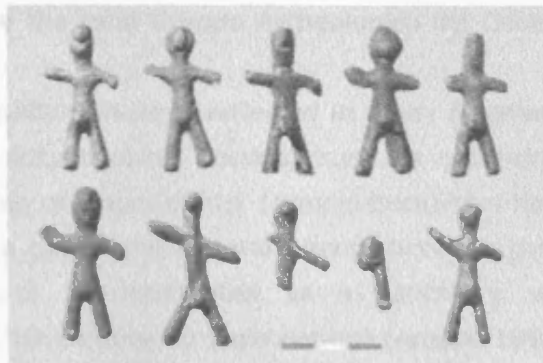


Figure 5C.7



Figures 5C.7-5C.8. Ithyphallic bronzetti from Monte Altare. Courtesy of the GAC

No systematic, full-scale field survey has been undertaken on the Monte Altare, although local amateur archaeologists and antiquarians came across superficial scatters of materials of likely votive character on the upper slopes in the 1970s and 1980s. The University of Padua subsequently excavated the upper slopes of the Monte Altare in two brief campaigns in 1989. The team dug ten trenches at the spots corresponding to surface finds collected during the fieldwalking preceding the excavation.

Unfortunately the archaeological strata are badly compromised by the likely location of the "core" of the shrine on the upper hill slopes and (or) top, so that the overall strata sequence is incoherent and mostly reversed, with later materials found underlying earlier artefacts.

Archaeologists looked for remains of a building or structure pertaining to the Iron Age and Roman votive deposit, but failed to unearth any traces of structures on the hill. They established a relative chronology based on a large quantity of artefacts, consisting of both

surface finds collected by the local Gruppo Archeologico del Cenedese, and those from the excavation.

The earliest occupation phase is reflected in many fragments of pottery presumably from utilitarian, heavy duty cooking vessels, such as wide-rimmed ollae (*olle ad orlo espanso*) with a decoration of 'finger marks' (*diteggiature*) that have been dated to the 11th century B.C. There was a gap in the material record between the 9th and 6th century BC, when the site began to be frequented as a sanctuary where worship continued uninterrupted until the 4th century AD (coin dating) (Arnosti 1993).

The most abundant find type for the Iron Age is the peak-shaped, "ox-yoke" or crenellated bronze lamina, mostly not decorated, but occasionally displaying little rows of dots. These artefacts (fig. 5.10) have been interpreted in a number of ways, from ox yokes to forts, from crowns to bridges on two rivers (Arnosti 1993: 60 *ff.*).

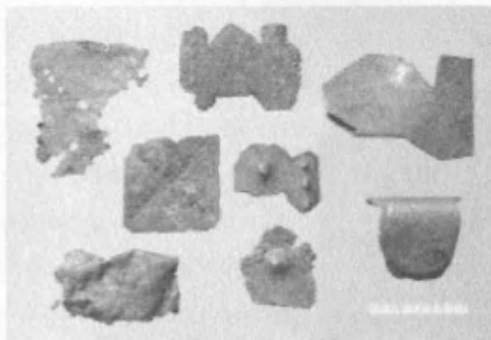


Figure 5C.9. Geometric laminae from Monte Altare

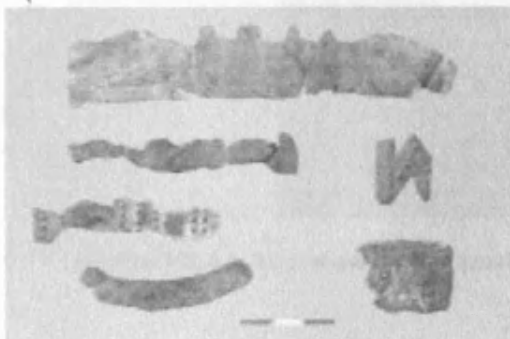


Figure 5C.10. More 'peak' or geometric laminae from Monte Altare. Courtesy of the GAC

Fieldwork

I visited the site in different seasons to experience the place and its degree of accessibility under different weather conditions.

I approached the site from 3 different directions and I assessed the different impressions it created. The approach from the West is said to follow a much older path from the area nowadays known as Case Posocòn from the West, and there exists another path behind modern Hotel Terme from the south. The third path, and one of the most ancient, started at Case Brazzoduro/Braccioduro and Salsa at the foot of the hill (see map C1).

The Western approach reaches the top by a long meadow called the Prà Liss, fig. 5C.11 (smooth meadow in the local dialect).



Figure 5C.11. The view of the peak from Prà Liss. Photograph by author



Figure 5C.12. The Posocon spring. Photograph by author

The experience of reaching the upper slopes from the North approach is somewhat disrupted by benches and waste bins positioned at regular intervals, indicating the most widely negotiated approach.

The West approach is different, as it is entirely surrounded by nature, and it involves following a narrow strip of a path through meadows and patches of shrubbery. Along the West path I detected five springs, four of which are dry. The lowest is the so-called Posocon Spring at 215 metres a.s.l. (fig. 5C.12 above). See map **C1** on pages 214-215 for the location of all springs on the hill.

At 320 m we came across a cluster of rocks with a spring head among the trees. The first "active" spring is located at 358 m a.s.l. just below the Prà Liss, where despite the torrid summer weather the presence of moist mud indicated the recent presence of water. I took the presence of springs into careful consideration also as I was aware that pottery fragments pertaining to drinking shapes had been found dating to the 11th century BC (LBA) on the upper slopes, albeit out of context.

The climb to the top follows the contours of the upper West slope and approaches the main peak from the south. The climb takes twenty minutes, and the hill tops become visible from the slopes five minutes or so before reaching them. The approach takes you through, or past, a 'corridor' or staircase of natural upright stones that seem to guide the approach to, and the revelation of, the hilltop. This is definitely a sequential, narrative element of this place (figs. 5C.12 and 5C.13 below and on the next page).

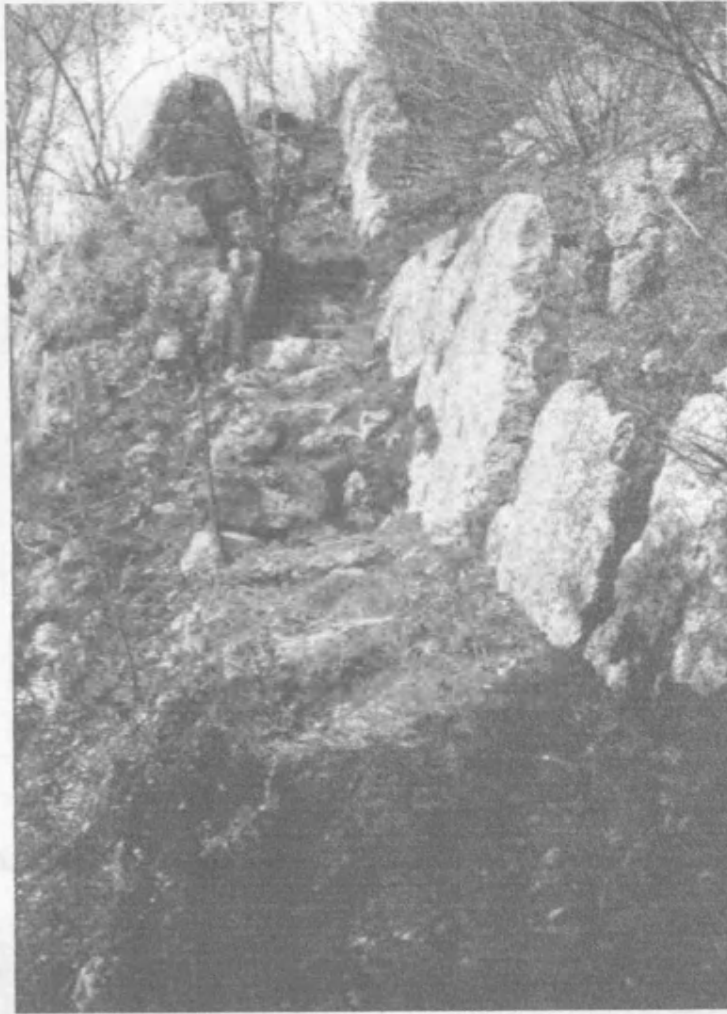


Figure 5C.13

Photo courtesy of G. Arzuffi

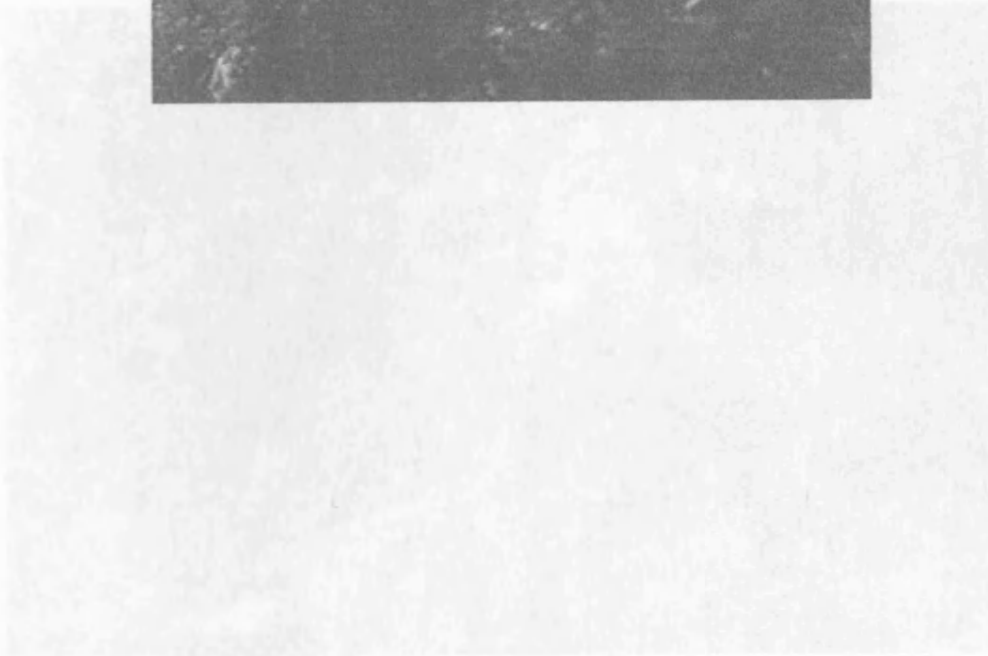


Figure 5C.14, The Scum-um on top. Photograph by G. Arzuffi



Figure 5C.13. Approaching the top one encounters a 'corridor' of upright stones.
Photographs by author



Figure 5C.14. The boulders on top. Photograph by G Arnosti

Palaeo-vegetation sampling and geological studies established that after centuries of human exploitation of the upper slopes of the hill, in the last few hundred years they were devoid of grassy topsoil and appeared barren and craggy in contrast with the other hills such as San Rocco and San Paolo that had not been extensively used for such purposes but were fortified in the Roman and post-Roman period- see map C1 (Arnosti 1990; 1993). Soil analyses of the hilltop (Arnosti 1990: 10 *ff.*, Borsato 1985: 64 *ff.*) showed that the layers corresponding to the 1st millennium BC consisted of gravels resulting from the fragmentation of boulders on the top of the hill that, it seems, had been a constant feature of the hilltop throughout the use of the site as a shrine.

The terrain as it is today appears as moderately steep hillsides to the west and south and of steep vertical sides to the north and east, with severely compromised geological strata owing to hillwash continuously accumulating in the lower slopes: deposits and objects from the hilltop would have been dislodged and dragged towards the lower slopes.

The site of Monte Altare would have been less than 1 km from the Early Iron Age settlement of Case Steccanella and Palasi and about 1.5 km from the settlement nuclei in Ceneda, the nearest being Salsa at the foot of the hill, in the proximity of the spring that gave the locality its name (Arnosti 1996: 48).

The visibility from the peaks is astounding. It would have dominated a view over the route to the north, the Val Lapisina/ Fadalto.



Figure 5C.15. The view South towards Venice. Photograph by C Forin

From the top (the highest point being 450.55 metres) visibility is great in all weather conditions. In clear days one can see as far as Venice, 90 km to the south (fig. 5C.15).

On a bright winter morning, the sunlight and shadow-play on the Prà Liss below me tinged the hill slopes and the meadow with a mellow, peaceful atmosphere.

I assessed the visible morphology of the hill, making a note of the extent of change through the centuries.

The hilltop is long, narrow and irregular, scattered with conglomerate boulders and trees (see figs. 5C.14 and 5C.16). The boulders scattered on the widest top (the one with a greatest surface and most easily accessible) could have conveyed a sense of awe if perceived as the seats or thrones for the divinity(ies) inhabiting the hill. The sense of place on the hilltop is one of a secluded, self-contained space among the trees and the rocks, yet one that also opened up to the visitor with far-reaching views.



Figure 5C.16. Boulders on the top



Figure 5C.17. View of Col Castelir. Photographs by author and M Masutti (top)

Col Castelir in Villa di Villa (42) is clearly visible even on misty days 10 km to the South-east (fig. 5C.17); Monte Piai (41) is clearly visible to the SW (fig. 5C.18) and it stands out as the sharpest and tallest height in the surrounding topography.

In terms of the aural experience of being on Monte Altare, the secluded feeling of distance from the lower regions minimises external sounds even today, when the hill is located not far from a motorway: in the Iron Age the experience of physical and aural

isolation of the hill top from the surrounding topography could have made an impression on people used to hearing everyday sounds of livestock, human activity and technological practices.



Figure 5C.18. View of Monte Piai from Mt Altare. Photograph by author

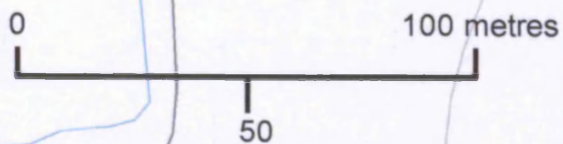
Material culture

I shall provide an in-depth discussion of the objects from Monte Altare in chapter 6, but will report here that the predominant elements seem to be fertility elements (ithyphallic bronzetti) and natural elements (peak laminae), followed in the Roman period by the oracular cult of an unnamed deity, indicated by the recovery of a staggering number of *sortes* (divination tablets) and possibly reflected in the local toponym for a recess or crevice in the rocky surface of the upper slope known as 'the old hag's cranny' (see appendix 3).



The hill is relatively prominent, the climb takes between 2 & 5 minutes. There is an excellent visibility all round that led Romans and Longobards to build fortifications here

CASTELLO DI ROGANZUOLO



View of Col Castelir



Bronzetti were mostly scattered under the belfry. The pit with the ram at the hill foot marked a possible sacrificial area. There is a sense of spatially distinct ritual activity areas, up above and down below

36

Castello Roganzuolo

C2) Castello Roganzuolo (36)

Landscape context

The site of Castello di Roganzuolo near San Fior (fig. 5C.19) corresponds to the hilly terrace occupied by a hill with the district church of S. Giuseppe on its top (fig. 5C.20), the municipal cemetery and its parking lot at ground level and the provincial road dividing these two locations, connecting the Veneto with the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia to the east. The nearest town is Castello Roganzuolo, a small centre South-East of Vittorio Veneto.



Figure 5C.19. GoogleEarth map of the Castello Roganzuolo area



Figure 5C.20. The church hill and the Campanile. Photographs by author

To the south the area borders with the Conegliano plain and with the Biadene valley to the West. To the east the area borders with Orsago (Presette - Prà della Stalla) / Cappella Maggiore and the Valbona, the area where Col Castelir is located (see below) and to the North-east with Vittorio Veneto, where the Monte Altare is located. The location is 3 km from Scomigo (39), the site of another possible small scale rural votive deposit on a low hill. The two localities, Castello Roganzuolo and Scomigo are located on opposite banks of the stream Cervada, and as such possibly connected with this water course (fig. 5C.21).

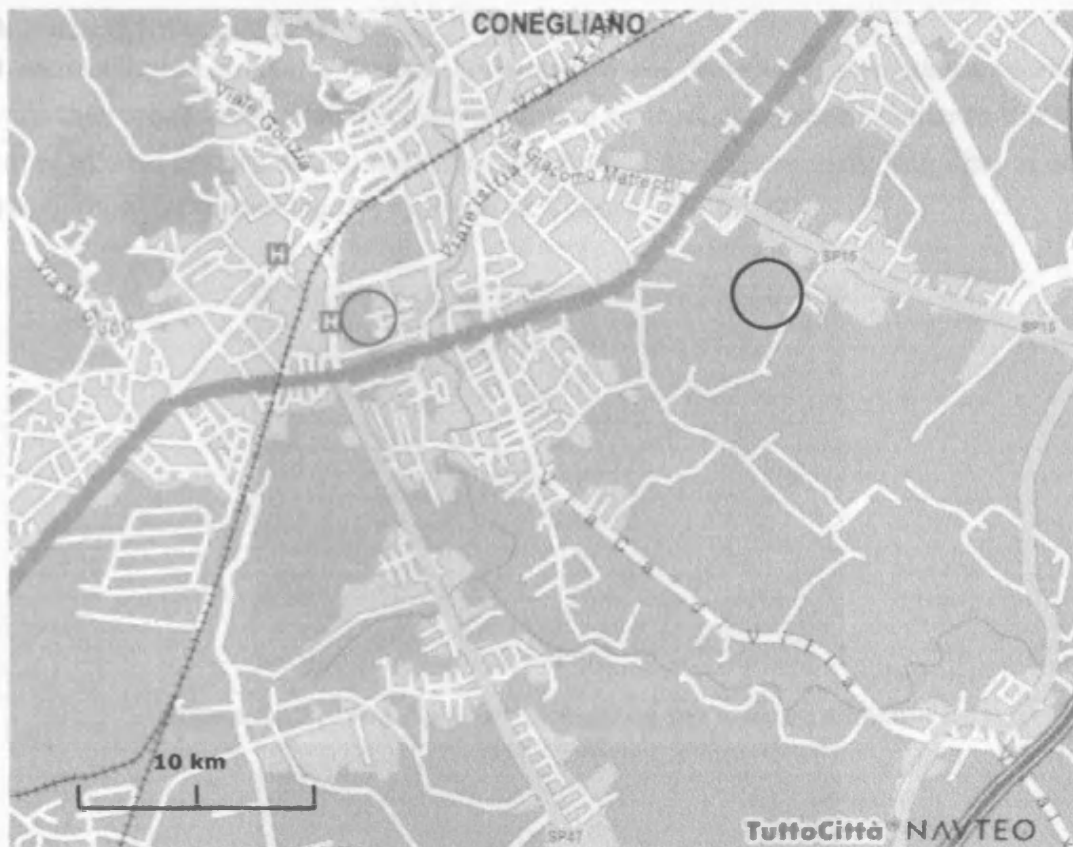


Figure 5C.21. Scomigo (left) and Castello Roganzuolo (right), separated by the course of the Cervada

The terrain is essentially a moderately hilly landscape with a few prominent peaks that never rise higher than 150 metres a.s.l. The hill where the church is now located and that is thought to be the focus of the Iron Age votive deposit rises to a mere 118 m a.s.l., yet is the only prominent point in the vicinity of the sacred area. The terrain would have been thickly wooded in antiquity before large scale agricultural activity started in the area.

The overall stratigraphy and aspect of the site was heavily compromised by the construction of the road and the cemetery complex. However, a natural "terrapieno" occupied by vineyards was such in antiquity and was walled for land containment, the establishment of boundaries or defensive purposes in the Late Roman period (Arnosti pers.comm.); it is very likely that a rural villa existed in the area underneath the vineyards during the Imperial age.

Background information

Local archaeologists from the Gruppo Archeologico del Cenedese came across sparse finds over a rather broad area: they discovered surface scatters of bronzetti dating to the 5th-4th centuries BC and pottery dating from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age, in addition to a likely ritual pit containing the skeleton of a sheep (fig. 5C.22).

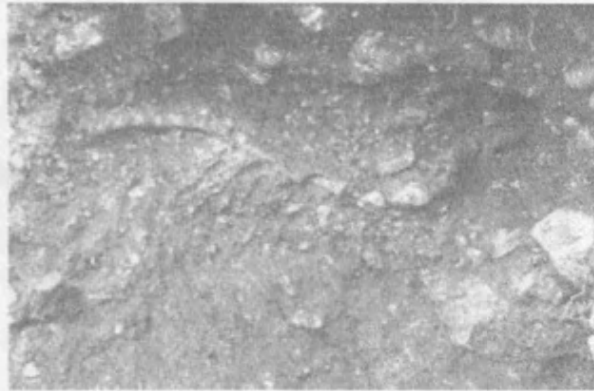


Figure 5C.22. The ritual pit containing the sheep's skeleton

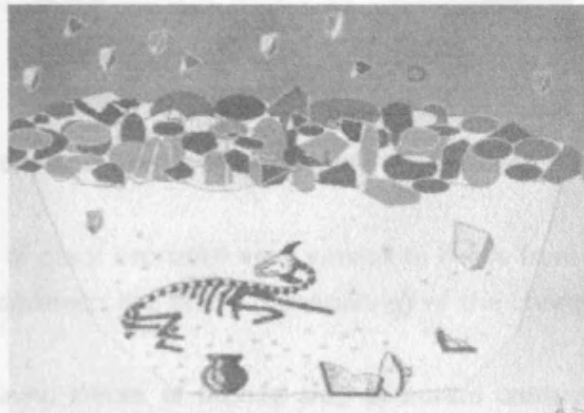


Figure 5C.23. Photograph and drawing courtesy of the GAC

Fieldwork

Local fieldwalkers retrieved a wealth of material ranging from La Tène coinage (Noric obols) and plastic-style fibulae, Late Bronze Age pottery, Iron Age bronzetti (fig.5C.24), a *cippus* inscribed in the Venetic alphabet of likely ritual destination (fig. 5C.25 below) and bricks pertaining to the Roman Villa that was located roughly above the fields and vineyards to the SW of the cemetery.



Figure 5C.24. Bronzetti found under the Campanile



Figure 5C.25. Inscribed cippus from Castello Roganzuolo. Courtesy of the GAC

A concentration of ritual bronzetti very similar to those from Monte Altare and Villa di Villa was recovered underneath the belfry (Campanile) of the church on top of the hill in the 1950s.

The GAC also found traces of bronze slag in buried contexts that would indicate in situ metalworking, possibly for votive purposes (Arnosti 1996: 68).

Fieldwork

I wanted to find out why local people had selected this particular location as a cult site and in what way it was connected with the nearby sacred sites of Monte Altare (40) and Col Castelir (42) in Villa di Villa. I visited the area and conducted non-systematic fieldwalking in a 1km radius around the cemetery.

The hill is a relatively prominent location, as mentioned above, and the climb takes between 2 and 4 minutes according to a person's age and fitness level. From the top one masters a great visibility of the Monte Altare to the NW and the Castelir to the E, as well as the Monte Baldo, where a Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement is likely.

I took photographs and GPS points of various parts of the site.

Material culture

I took the coordinates of the several find-spots of material ranging from the Late Bronze Age to the Roman period. I set out to investigate the spatial relationship of the various find spots and their connection with the ritual pit. Considering the predominance of bronzetti on the church hill, I started from the top down.

The location of the pit containing the sheep is at the foot and across the road from the church hill. Today no remains of it survive underneath the concrete of the parking lot, but my colleague was able to point out the exact spot, where I took a series of GPS points for local site mapping.

This hill, and the whole place, have a long history of use (Sartori 1978: 10 ff.). After its sacred significance in the pre-Roman period, and the establishment there of a Roman watch-tower (Sartori 1978: 23), there was once a Longobard castle, due to the excellent visibility afforded by the position on the hill top and in the flatter surrounding topography, later replaced by the 16th century church (1543), complete with frescoes by Tiziano Vecellio, and the nearby 19th century graveyard (Sartori 1978: 30 ff.; Sergio De Nardi pers. comm.).

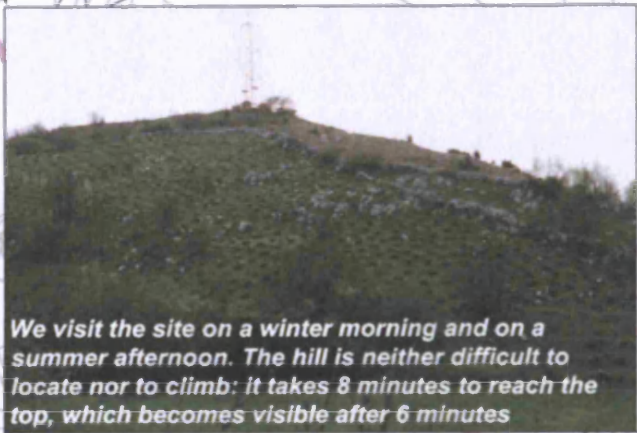
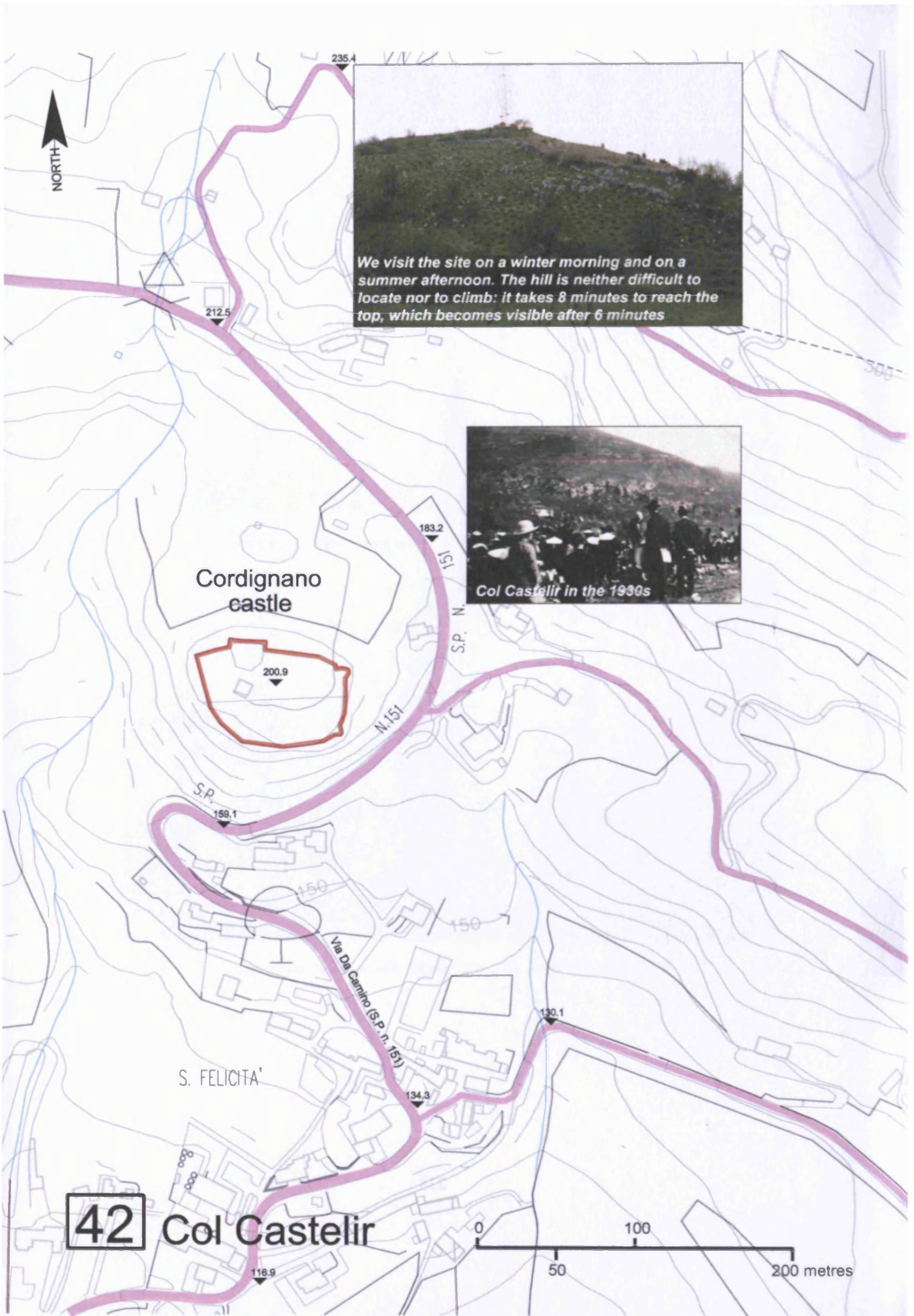
The connection between the cultivated fields and vineyard to the South and the strategic and ritual use of the hill through the centuries indicates a varied, patchy pattern of use and significance of the locale. It just seems incredible that this site is unpublished at a regional level.



Figure 5C.26. View of the Monte Altare in the distance



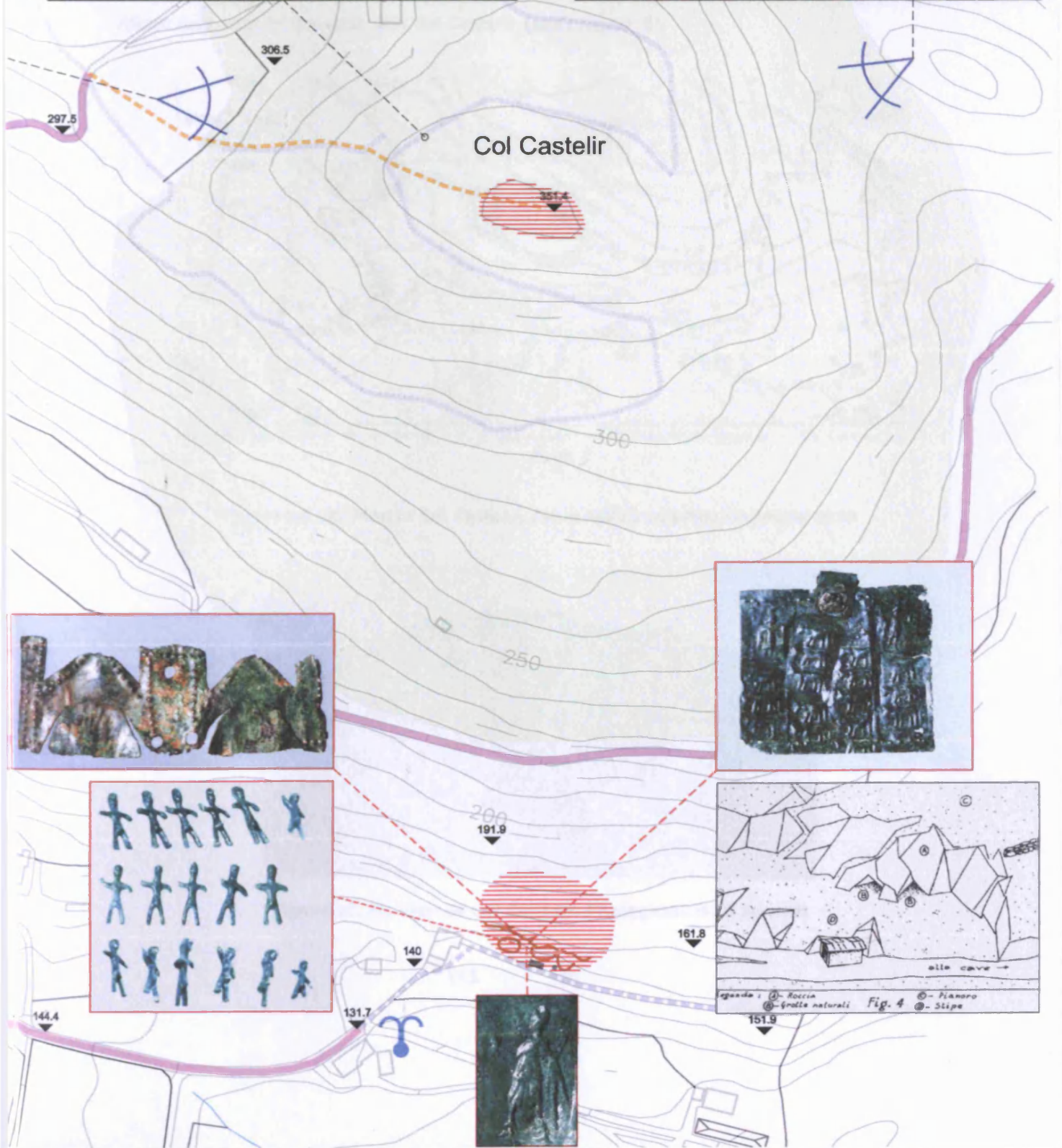
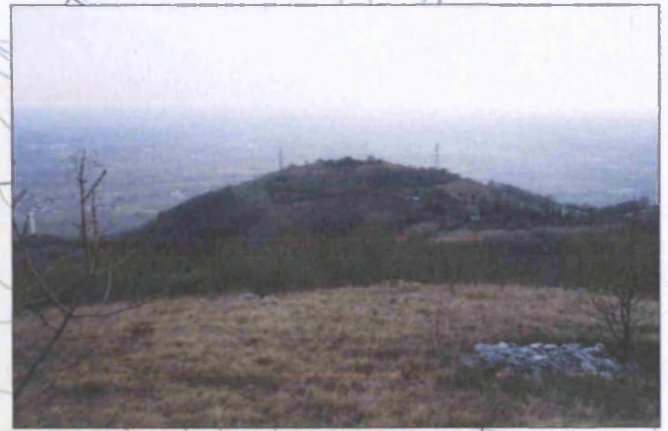
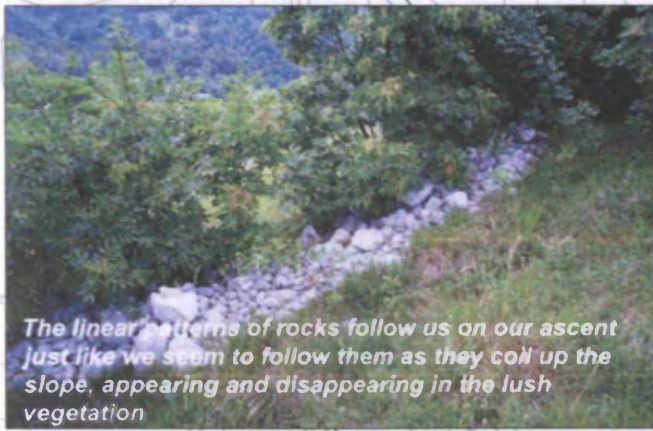
Figure 5C.27. View of Col Castelar. Photograph by author



We visit the site on a winter morning and on a summer afternoon. The hill is neither difficult to locate nor to climb: it takes 8 minutes to reach the top, which becomes visible after 6 minutes



Col Castellar in the 1930s



C3) Col Castelir, Villa di Villa (42)

Landscape context

The Col Castelir is a rounded mound in the middle of flattish countryside (figs. 102-105), 10.6 km east of Monte Altare (40). The hill itself (Monte or Col Castelir) is situated in the modern locality of Villa di Villa di Cordignano. It lies at the modern boundary with the Friuli Venezia Giulia and is part of the amphitheatre of hills that starts in the NW with Monte Altare and ends in the east with the Castelir (see chapter 6).



Figure 5C.28. Plan of Col Castelir. From Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992



Figure 5C.29. View of Col Castelir. Photograph by G Arnosti



Figure 5C.30. Erosion caused by quarrying on CC



Figure 5C.31. Col Castelir from the hill foot. Photographs by author

To the north lies the Valbona valley with the moderate height of Le Costate and the Friuli piedmont fringe culminating in Mt Cavallo NE of Castelir, well into Friuli territory.

The South-east side of the hill has been exploited for limestone quarrying since the 1920s, which is why the hill appears white and eroded when looking at it from that direction, but appears unscathed from the north (fig. 5C.29).

The hill, belonging to a typical karst milieu, contains a number of natural tunnels, underground springs and an unexplored cave system which has collapsed for the most part due to the quarry works.

The top of the hill rises to 353 metres a.s.l.

Background information

Archaeologists have been aware of human presence on Col Castelir since the 1940s.

Two different areas of the hill slopes have been extensively explored and excavated since then: the top that revealed remains of circular dwelling huts dating to the Bronze Age and the south slope, near the quarries that yielded a substantial votive deposit consisting of a few hundred objects of a typically Venetic cult nature.

Archaeologists argued that the materials had been carried downslope by hillwash and explored the ledge just above it looking for a structure pertaining to the Iron Age cult place but to no avail.

The top of the hill was surveyed and then excavated by test pitting, yielding a group of circular dwellings with beaten earth floors and utilitarian pottery dated to the 11th to the 9th centuries BC (Arnosti 1996: 50-51). Patterns of vegetation growth (figs. 5C.29 above and 5C.32 below) give a clue to the existence of palisades or walls enclosing the top of the hill during the late Bronze Age, when the hilltop was used as a settlement site. The overall surface of the enclosed hilltop and upper slopes covers a few hectares (ibidem: 56).



Figure 5C.32. Vegetation patterns on the hill slopes and top. Photograph by author

Recently, Leonardi excavated the hill slopes in an endeavour to explore the spatial layout of the cult place. His excavation established that the retaining rubble wall, previously interpreted as pre-Roman, is to be dated to the Roman period or the Romanisation phase, thereby eliminating what scant evidence there was for the existence of structures pertaining to the Iron Age cult place (Leonardi pers.comm.).

The three predominant types of votives at this site were: decorated bronze laminae (figs. 5C.33-5C.35) depicting a human figure surrounded by cattle, stylised ithyphallic bronzetti (figs. 5C.35, 5C.37) and non-decorated peak-crenellated laminae (figs. 5C.38, 5C.39).



Figure 5C.33. Cattle lamina with anthropomorphic figure

Figure 5C.33. Cattle lamina with anthropomorphic figure. Courtesy of the author.



Figure 5C.34. Detail of the above lamina



Figure 5C.35. Decorated lamina depicting cattle and an anthropomorphic figure. Courtesy of the GAC

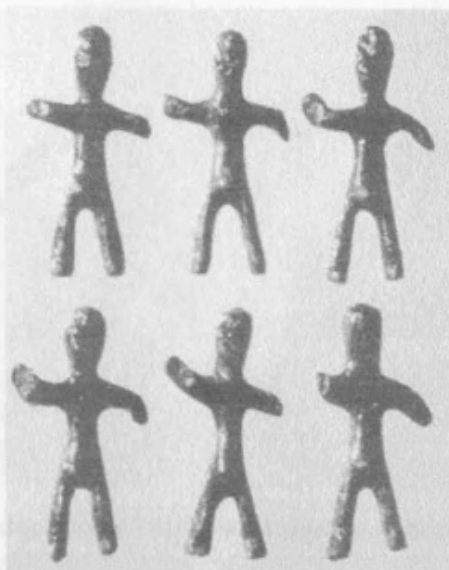


Figure 5C.36. Bronzetti from Villa di Villa. Courtesy of the GAC

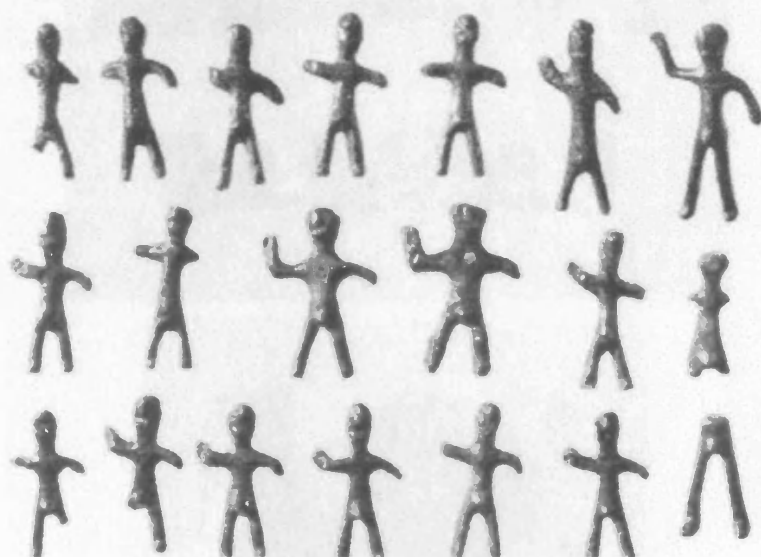


Figure 5C.37. Bronzetti from Villa di Villa. From Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992

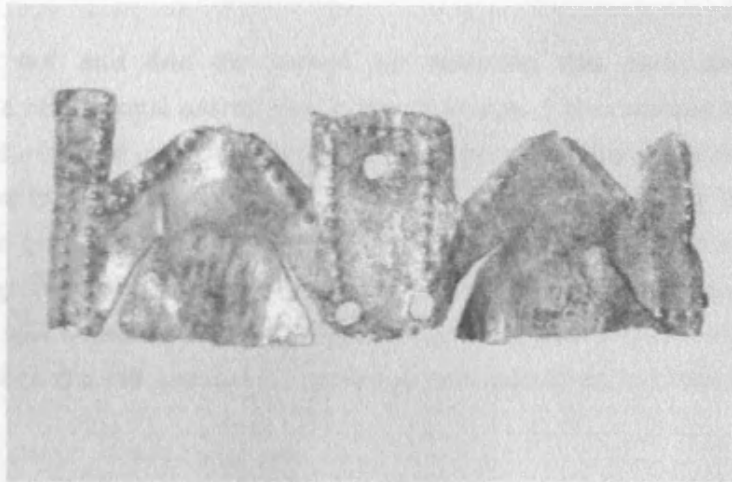


Figure 5C.38. Non decorated 'peak' laminae from Villa di Villa/Col Castellir

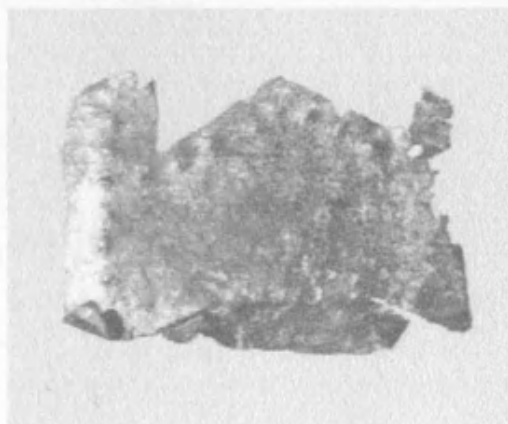
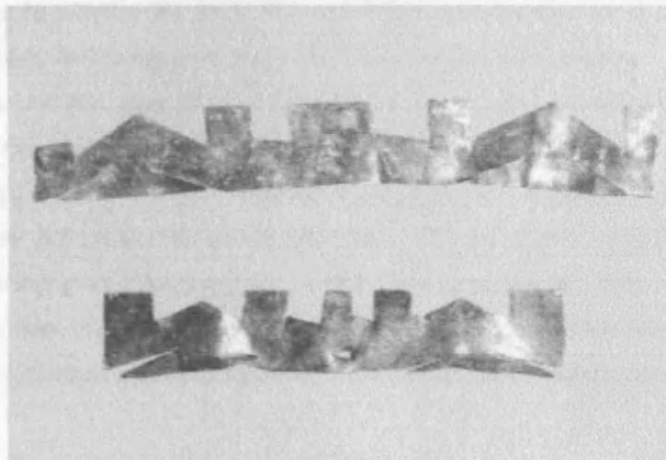


Figure 5C.39. More peak/crenellated laminae. Photographs courtesy of G Arnosti

Fieldwork

I wanted to set out and find the reason for selecting this particular location for the establishment of a major local sacred site in the Iron Age. I also wanted to assess the sense of place one has during the approach to and the navigation of this particular locale.

I measured the distance of Col Castelir from settlements in the Iron Age looking at modern maps and going through local archaeological reports/articles on settlement traces: I found that during the Iron Age there were no known settlements near Col Castelir. Col Castelir however saw a Bronze Age occupation on its top, with a gap in human use until the 4th century BC when the hill seemed to assume a prevalently sacred character.

We visit the site on a winter morning and again on a summer afternoon. It is neither difficult to locate nor to climb: to reach the top takes approximately 8 minutes; the timing of visualisation of the top, following the main path is roughly 6 minutes.

All along the slopes are rows of rocks of uncertain provenance and purpose, but probably medieval field boundaries (fig. 5C.40 and map C3 on pp. 237-238). The linear patterns of rocks appear to follow a pathway leading to the upper hill slopes and the top from the south. They follow us on our ascent just like we seem to follow them as they coil up the slope, appearing and disappearing in the lush vegetation. They continue on the north slope and split into two distinct rows to the foot of the hill to the north-east. They almost form a dromos or suggested mode of approach to the upper slopes and top.



Figure 5C.40. The rows of stones on Col Castellr. Photograph courtesy of the GAC

On top, visibility is great and spans 180° as the hill top today consists of a central 'hump' encircled by lateral clearings and hollows (*conche*) at a lower level (figs. 5C.41 and 5C.42).



Figure 5C.42. The view from the summit of Col Castellr. Photograph by author

Visibility is great from the summit on a clear day, as the hill top today consists of a central 'hump' encircled by lateral clearings and hollows (*conche*) at a lower level (figs. 5C.41 and 5C.42). The hill was a prominent landmark and was situated in a strategic position for a stronghold or a watchtower. The surrounding countryside, including the hills and valleys, was visible from the summit. It was the highest and most visible point in the area, and it was used as a landmark for navigation and communication.



Figure 5C.41. View of the hilltop with uneven pattern of vegetation



Figure 5C.42. The dips in the middle of the hill top. Photographs by author

Visibility of and from Col Castelir on a clear day is very good. The hill was rather prominent and was situated in a strategic position, like a mound/dome in the flatter surrounding countryside. Visibility of Monte Altare would have been total, no obstacles: it was the highest and most recognisable hilltop visible from Castelir on a clear day, 10.6 km to the North-west (fig. 5C.43).



Figure 5C.43. View of Monte Altare. Photograph by author

I also dealt with the issue of water sources at the site of Col Castelar. If there were springs along or in the hill, they would have been disturbed and obliterated by the intensive quarrying carried out through time, which could have sensibly altered the original shape and aspect of the hill, and smoothed down its contour.

Caves are still located in the inner part of the hill, generated by karst processes that dug into its limestone core. The condition of water sources and caves today is unknown, as well as the full extent of damage.

I also wanted to investigate the significance of place-name studies in the area (see section "A" in Appendix 3), I carried out fieldwork along the course of the nearby torrent Insuga (see figs. 5C.44, 5C.45 and 46 below) that flows no further than 1km from Col Castelar to verify whether the torrent had a significant topographical relationship with the hill, which could have been the seat of a Celtic-inspired cult lingering into the Middle Ages in the legend of San Tiziano. I started the reconnaissance of the torrent along the Meschio, by taking a coordinate and photographs on the river bend by the bank of the Meschio, more precisely by the capitello on Via Meschio.



Figure 5C.44. View of the Col Castelir from the torrent Insuga



Figure 5C.45. The torrent Insuga. Photographs by author

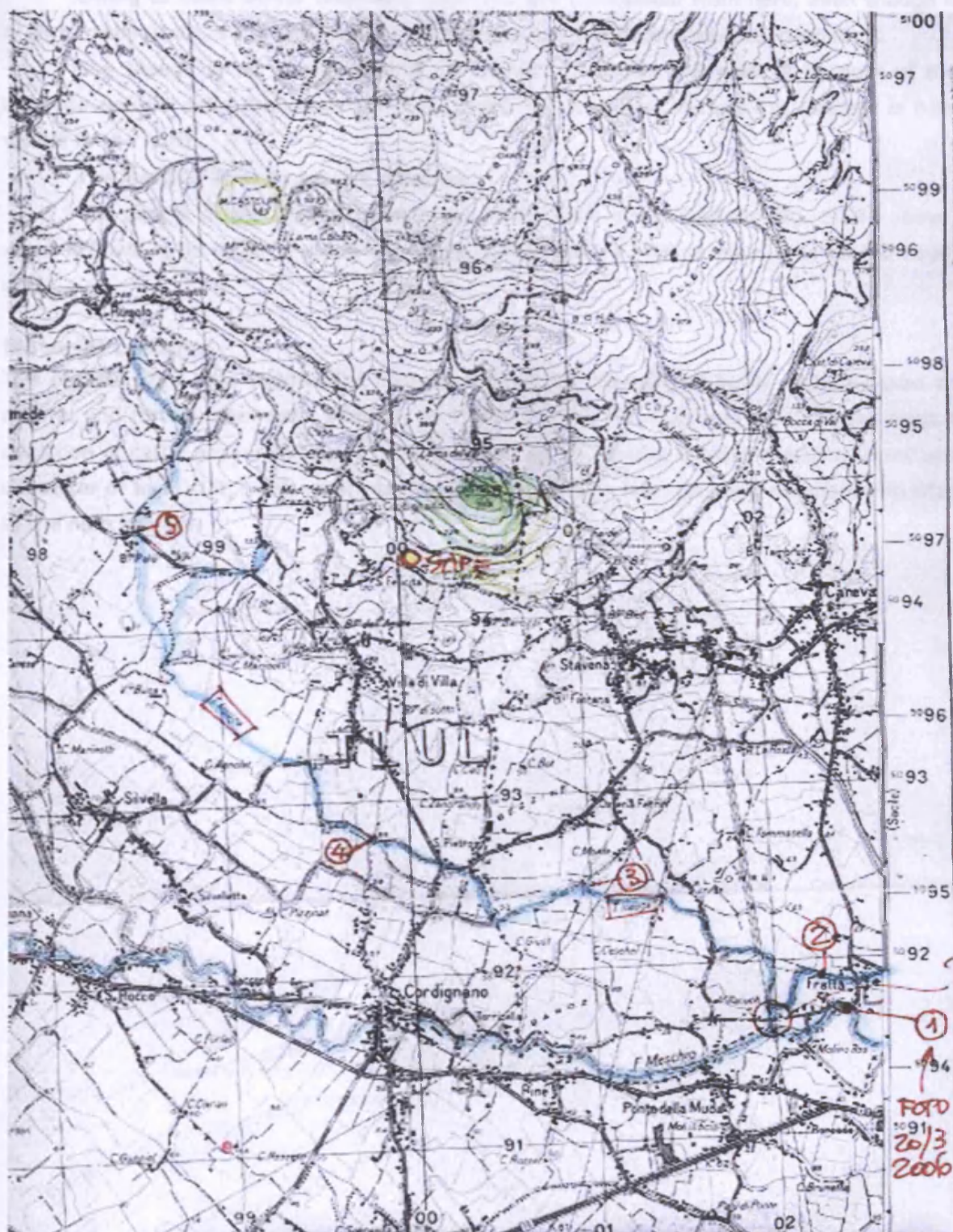


Figure 5C.46. Map of the area showing the Insuga torrent and Col Castellar

Owing to misty winter weather I could not see Col Castelir from here, even though it is 1km to the north, but it would have been visible under different weather conditions.

The Insuga is 50 metres east of GPS point 1. I took GPS point 2 in sight of the capitello on Via della Francesca (in the locality called Fratta), where Col Castelir is fully visible to the north.

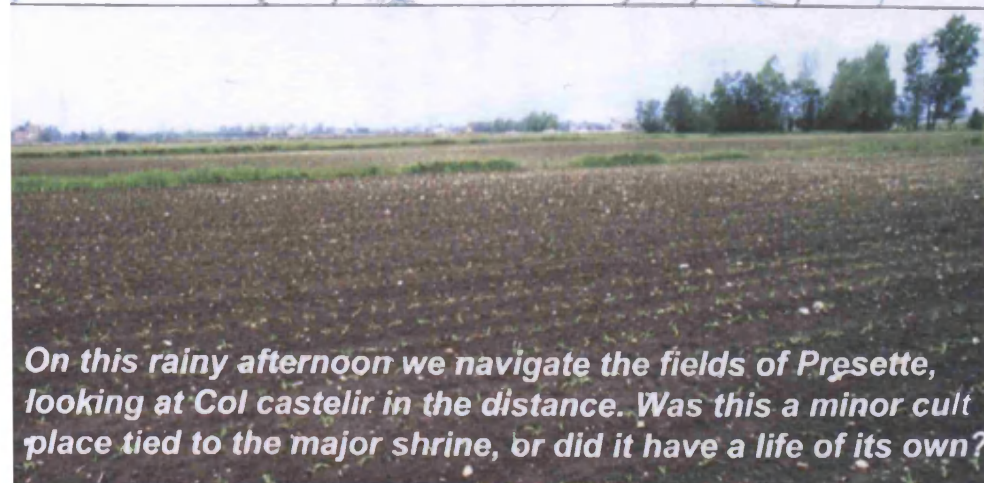
The Meschio flows in a S- SE direction.

The course of the Insuga never really loses sight of Col Castelir (fig. 5C.44 above) when it flows in its vicinity, along the south foot of the hill and its plain area on the south side.

Material culture

The objects from Villa di Villa/Col Castelir suggest an agricultural belief system based on natural and fertility elements, similarly to Monte Altare (40), but here we have the explicit depiction of cattle and/or the god (?) on laminae, which denotes a more specifically pastoral character of local cult. I will return to the material culture from this and neighbouring sites in the next chapter.

View of the Col Castelir



On this rainy afternoon we navigate the fields of Presette, looking at Col castelir in the distance. Was this a minor cult place tied to the major shrine, or did it have a life of its own?



C4) Presette- Prà della Stalla (37)

Landscape context

The site of Presette is located south of the river Meschio and roughly 3.5 km east of Castello Roganzuolo (36) and 3 km south of the Col Castelir (42). The site in its present condition consists of cultivated fields along a local road (fig. 5C.47).

Predictably there is no evidence of structures or features.

Arnosti mentions the presence of the spring line in the vicinity of Prà della Stalla (Arnosti 1990: 50).

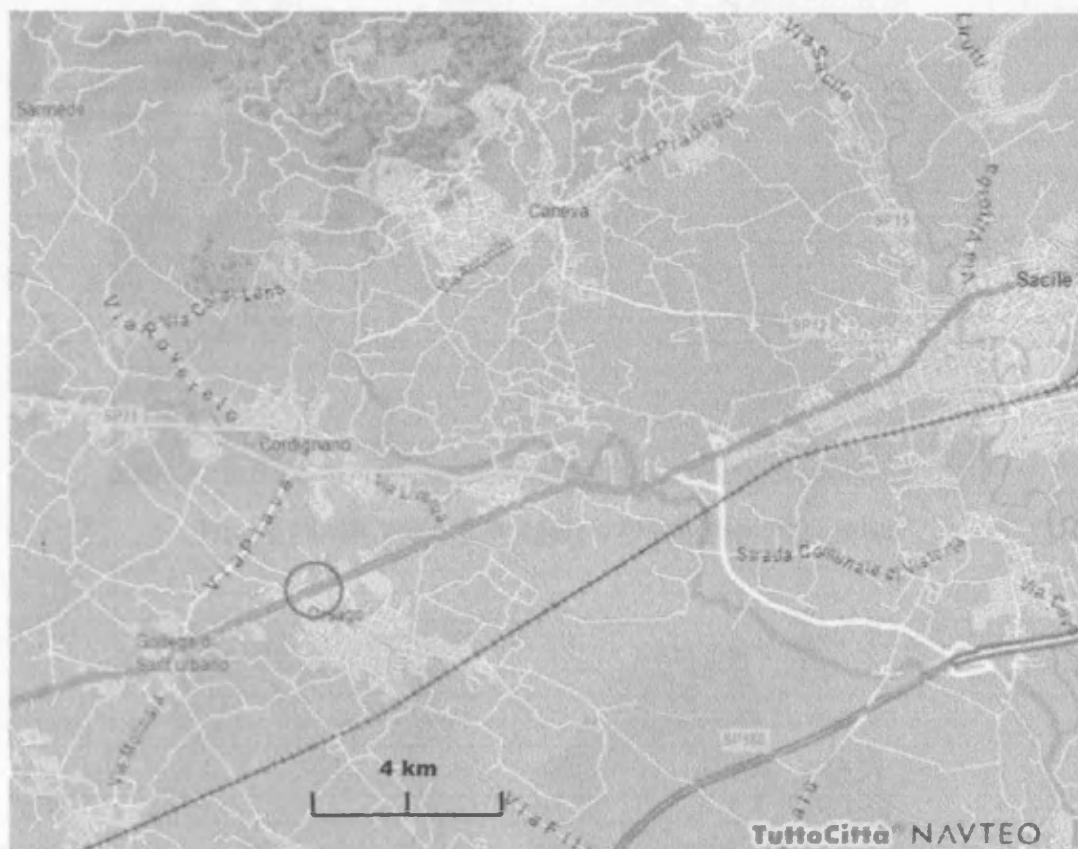


Figure 5C.47. Map of the Presette/Orsago/Godega area

Background information

The Gruppo Archeologico del Cenedese found two scatters of archaeological material at two different locations, one called Presette and the other Prà della Stalla; with the latter identifying the find spot of the Venetic votives. These two clusters were found in two adjacent fields separated by a ditch and an irrigation canal.

In the ploughsoil of Field 1 (Prà della Stalla) fieldwalkers retrieved remains of an aedicula pertaining to a Roman temple building (Arnosti 1990, 50-51).

Field 2 (Presette) is located approximately 300 metres from Field 1 (fig. 5C.48). In Field 2 a member of GAC found a Kraftig Profilierte fibula (derived from La Tène 3= 2nd century BC, Arnosti pers.comm.) along with other pre-Roman finds such as fragments of bronze laminae depicting a human figure surrounded by cattle of the Villa di Villa type (figs. 5C.49, 5C.50) and 3 superimposed fragments of a situla (oval with a plain flared foot) of the Mel (49) type.



Figure 5C.48. Field 2, Presette. Photograph by author

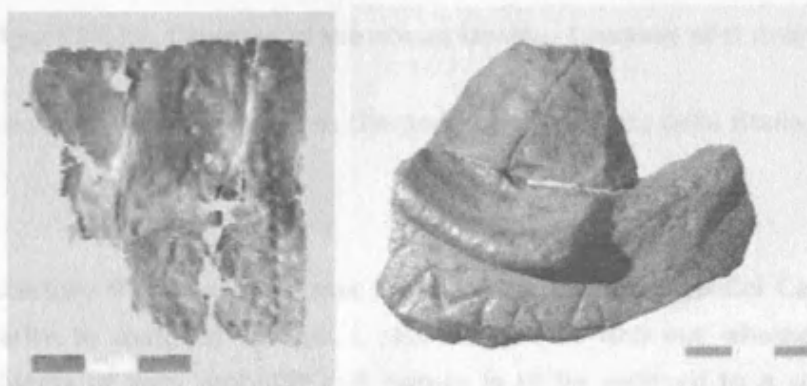


Figure 5C.49. Finds from Presette: lamina and inscribed vessel. Courtesy of the GAC

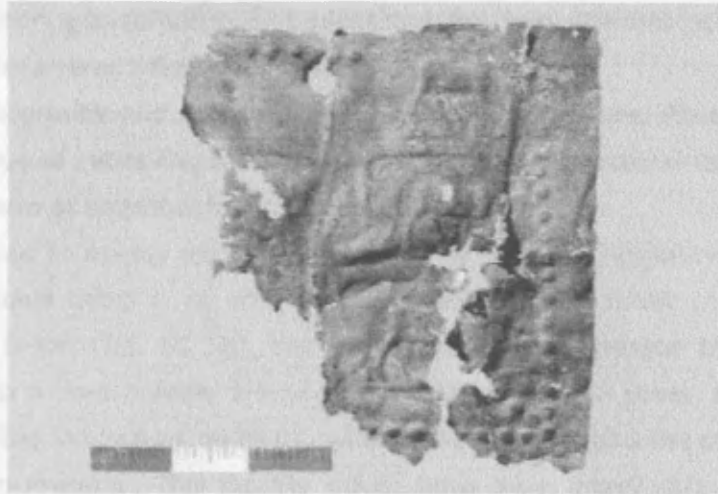


Figure 5C.50. Finds from Presette: lamina of the Villa di Villa type. Courtesy of the GAC

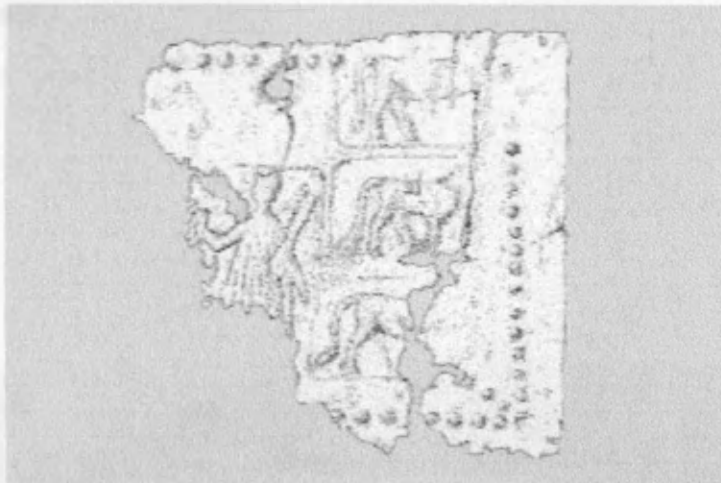


Figure 5C.51. Drawing of the above lamina. Courtesy of G Arnosti

There was subsequently a Roman villa in the general area of Prà della Stalla.

Fieldwork

I wanted to ascertain if the location was in any way connected to Col Castelir (42) apart from the similarity in material culture. I also wanted to find out whether the scatter of laminae and objects of very probable cult nature is to be ascribed to a small scale votive deposit or to perhaps a localised cluster or cache of items belonging to a major nearby sacred place.

I began by orientating myself in the local countryside and identified the precise spots where fieldwalkers retrieved the objects pertaining to the different phases, Venetic and

Roman, which I then geo-referenced. I identified the two different scatters by the fields where they were discovered (Field 1 and Field 2).

I took photographs and assessed the conditions of the site. Ploughing has of course obliterated any hope of retrieving substantial or even slight structural remains, if ever there were any, in the form of negative features such as pits.

I then set out to assess the extent of visibility and inter-visibility with nearby sacred places. On clear days there is an excellent visibility of Col Castelir (42) approximately 3 kilometres to the N-NW (fig. 5C.52), and intervisibility is buttressed by the GIS viewshed analysis. Even with a considerably tall vegetation presence and cover, the hill would stand out in its surrounding landscape, so much so that the quarries and the pylons on the top are clearly visible from Presette. This locality would have been intervisible with the prominent sacred place and seem to have been linked to it, according to the typology of the votive laminae found on site.



Figure 5C.52. View of Col Castelir from Presette. Photograph by author

The proximity and ease of access on foot to the hill from this plain area could have included Presette in a ceremonial trackway or as a stop along a pilgrim route towards the Friuli or towards the shrine of Castello Roganzuolo (36) and Monte Altare (40).

Lastly, I took into account the significance of springs: the absence of archaeological traces related to the water element, however, seems to indicate that the alleged presence of

springs in the Iron Age and Roman period was not an essential element of cult (if we are indeed dealing with a cult place per se, which I think is more than likely).

There being so few surviving elements of the original landscape to assess, I simply took photographs from the GPS points and moved on.

Material culture

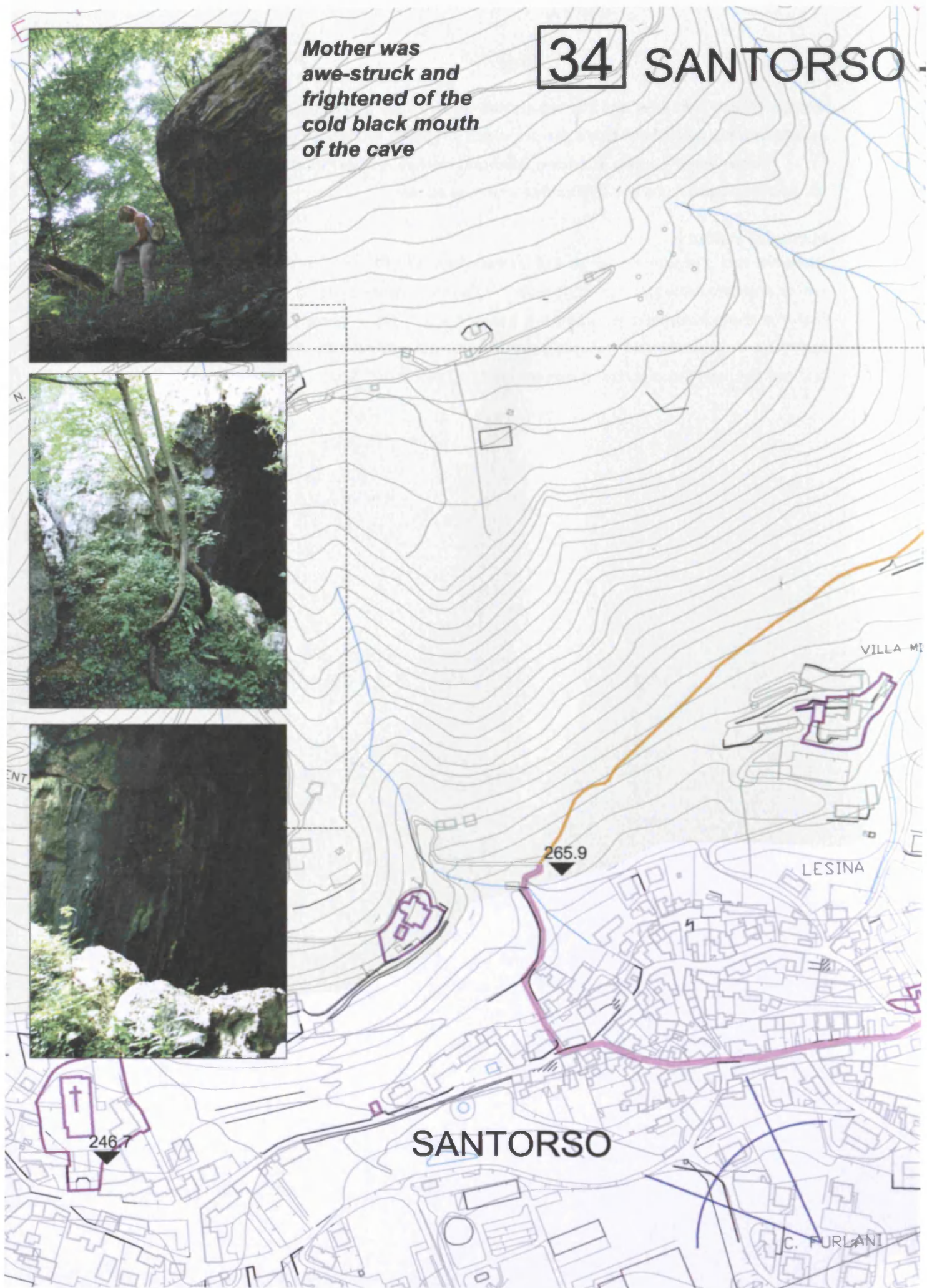
I believe this site was linked to Col Castelir/Villa di Villa (42) in the intrinsic nature of the votive objects. Although inconspicuous in relation to other sites, it could have had significant features that demanded its use as a 'ritual' focus. "Many places, profoundly significant to particular individuals and groups, have little visual prominence. They are known viscerally, and not through the discerning eye or mind." (Tuan 1977: 162).



*Mother was
awe-struck and
frightened of the
cold black mouth
of the cave*



34 SANTORSO



Bocca Lorenza

The interior of the cave is cold and damp, and gigantic rocks loom in the half light in the atrium



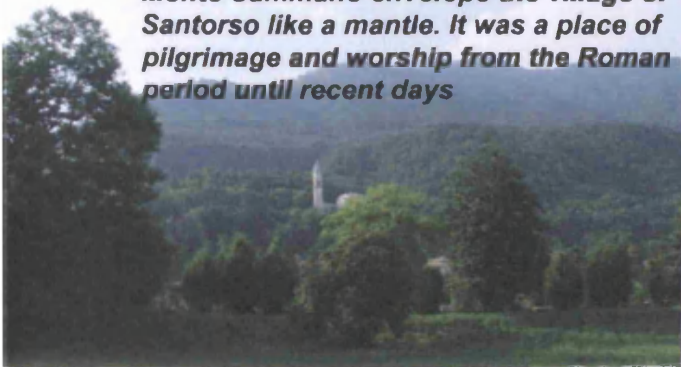
Bocca Lorenza

372

CAMPASTRINI



Monte Summano envelops the village of Santorso like a mantle. It was a place of pilgrimage and worship from the Roman period until recent days



Strada Statale N. 350

200.5

NORTH

0 50 100 200 metres

C5) Cave of Bocca Lorenza (34)

Landscape context

The Bocca Lorenza cave is situated on the south side of Monte Summano (figs. 5C.54 and map **C5**), north of the village of Santorso in the Vicenza piedmont, in the middle of the Val Grande and blends into the rocky hill side. The mouth of the cave (figs. 5C.55-57) is clearly visible upon climbing a few steps into the side of the hill: the interior is dark, humid, the chamber sloping down and inwards, with visible hooks for ropes. The first remarkable visual elements are the gigantic, fantastically-shaped rocks in the atrium (fig. 5C.56), then the progressively narrow passages leading into the depths of the cave, which is 36 metres deep and consists of three chambers (Barfield and Broglio 1966)

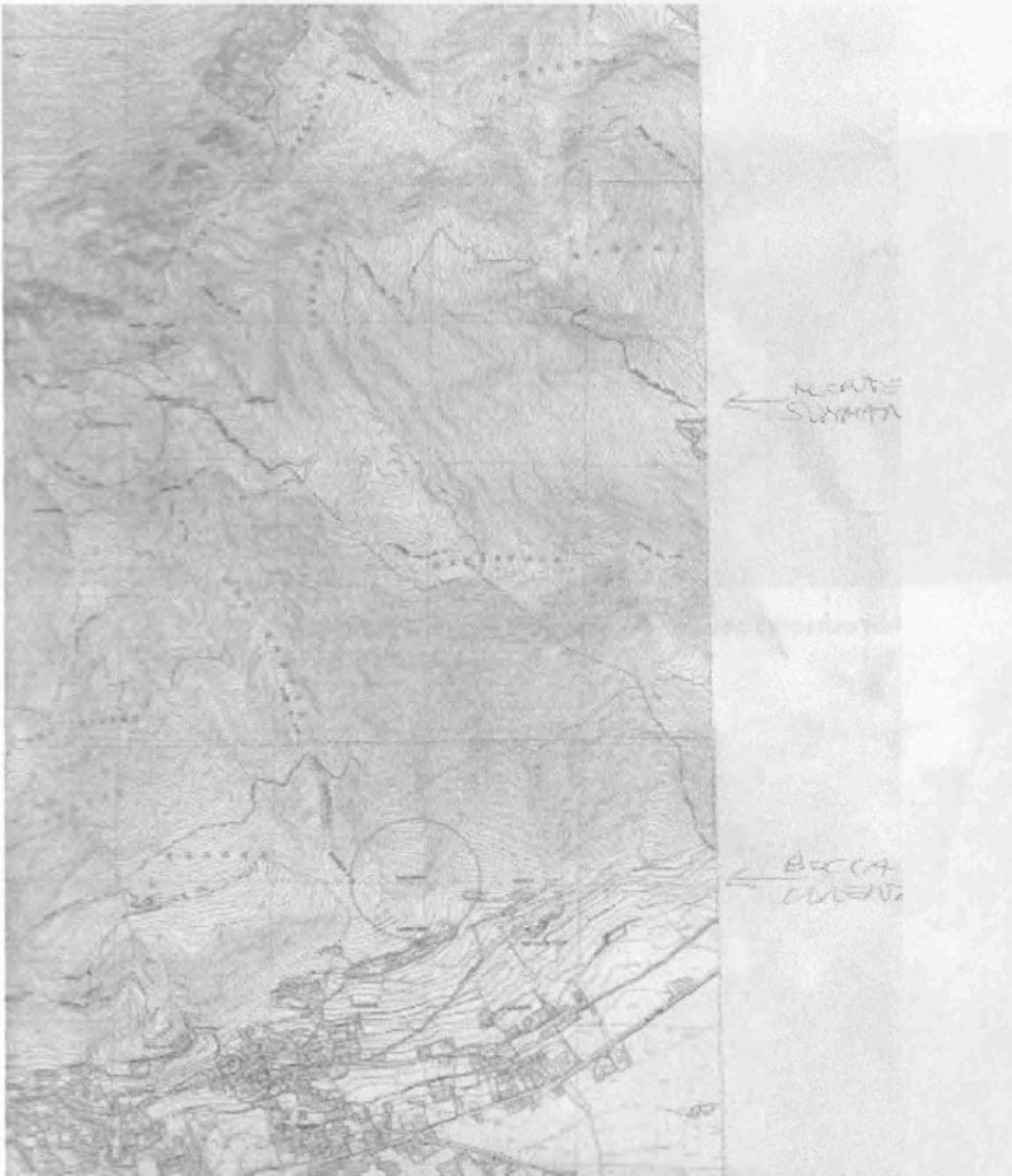


Figure 5C.53. Map showing the location of the cave of Bocca Lorenza on Monte Summano



Figure 5C.54. Monte Summano, Santorso (Vicenza)



Figure 5C.55. The top of the cave mouth.

Background information

Local antiquaries found the first archaeological traces in the early 20th century. The cave was then excavated in 1909, 1930 and at the start of the 1960s (Barfield and Broglio 1966).

There were various uses of the cave throughout antiquity: the earliest traces of use qualify it as a shelter for transhumant shepherds in Late Neolithic, Bronze Age and in Late Antiquity. In the Copper Age it was used as burial place: partially charred human bones pertaining to more than one inhumation burial and dated to the Copper Age were recovered alongside pierced animal fangs, pierced shells and three flat copper adzes, as well as various flint implements (Barfield and Broglio 1966).

In the Mid to Late Iron Age the cave was a cult location (ca. 5th century BC) as witnessed by the deposition of miniature vessels , grey pottery and one fragment of inscribed antler; it later became a Roman votive deposit judging by the recovery of a Roman javelin head and a few bone fibulae (1st century AD).

The cave was then used in the Longobard period (6th-7th c AD), as indicated by the recovery of a small antler comb of probable ritual destination.

Whatever its use, Bocca Lorenza would have been used year-round as it provided shelter from the elements, be it the cold Northern winter or the summer heat.

Fieldwork

The shape of Monte Summano is an easily recognisable landmark in the landscape of the Vicenza Prealpi; it hovers over the villages below like an all-enveloping mantle. There are three paths leading up to its upper slopes, but the only historically significant one is the one leading up from the village of Santorso (Giovanni Luigi Fontana, <http://www.matiaciancia.com/summano.htm>).

The hill top was identified with the local god Summanus in the Roman period and was the destination of sacred pilgrimages from afar, so much so that non-native plants and flowers can be found on the slopes and top of the mountain (<http://www.matiaciancia.com/summano.htm>); then came the local Christianised saint San Summano, so that the locale maintained a holy significance throughout the medieval period and, as sanctuaries were established on the slopes of the hill, religious processions continued on the Summano until recently.

The cave was, and is, clearly, a part of a long-term meaningful landscape for people near and far, and a paramount landmark of local identities and perception, still.

The cave of Bocca Lorenza itself it is rather deep (36m deep) and extremely picturesque.



Figure 5C.56. The cave mouth.

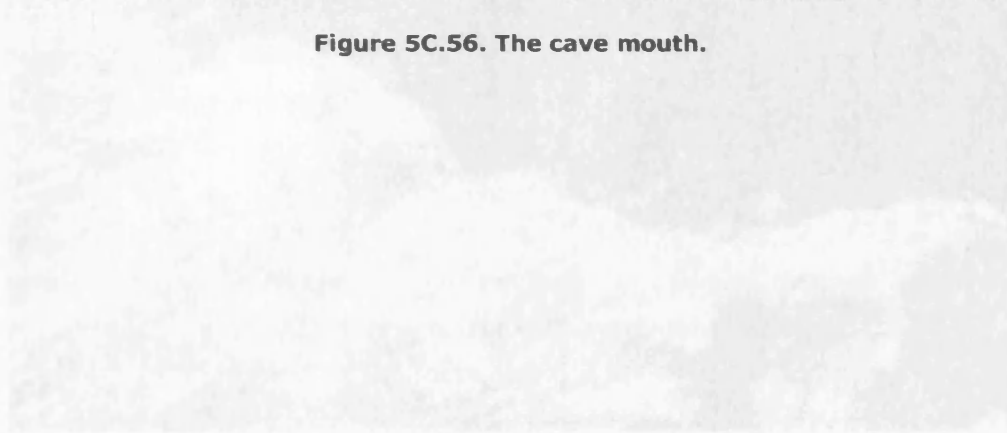


Figure 5C.57. The water wall of the ultra stream. All photographs by Sinker



Figure 5C.57. The outer wall of the cave atrium. All photographs by author

The gloomy interior is damp and cold, a striking contrast with the hot and oppressive summer afternoon. Bocca Lorenza is shrouded in awe-inspiring isolation in a peaceful environment. One can only hear the birds and insects buzzing, no signs of modern activity. The feeling of damp cold (10° C) and the dripping sound of stillicide water and the torrent in the depths of the cave impress the visitor, and convey a sense of 'otherness'.

Mother and I reach the meadow in front of the cave, and I stop to get my camera and GPS from the bag; mother goes ahead of me and climbs a few rocky steps ahead of me. I cannot see her when she disappears round the corner but I can clearly hear her gasping and calling out, expressing her instinctive amazement and fear of the cave she has come across suddenly on top of the steps. She, who is not trained in phenomenological or perceptual archaeology, and whom I did not brief on the contents of the cave and its cultural uses and contexts, had experienced and spontaneously expressed a genuinely strong sense of place and declared herself "scared and awe-struck" in front of the cave mouth, thereby expressing her reluctance to enter it. I find this incident fascinating, especially in terms of the strength of her impression.

The echoes and deep tunnels, rather steeply descending into the heart of the cave would have been perceived by others before as magical, special, and secret (cf. Skeates 1991: 126 ff; Whitehouse 2001). In addition to that purely sensory perception, the place would have had a long history of use and awareness of many human groups since long before its use as a votive deposit. Ultimately, Bocca Lorenza was a long-term, multiple use ritual and habitation site, significant for a number of factors: its nature, its positioning, the rock formations, the underground water, the echoes: a special place strategically situated for transhumance.

Mt Summano itself could have been perceived as a sacred place: as well as ascending to the sky, upward, one could also descend into the depths of the mountain through the cave Bocca Lorenza, the deep natural cave yielding remains of habitation, burials and cult practices. Summano could be perceived as a liminal place, a boundary between human and deity, the realm of the living and the realm of the dead (Fontana, <http://www.matiaciancia.it>).

Material culture

The multi-period, multi-use character of Bocca Lorenza bears witness to the dynamic relationship of people and their land; groups and communities inhabiting the landscape select locations that are significant to them, and these can be altered by structures or left unscathed, and they can survive the social and political turmoil of Romanisation or be gone

along with Venetic political and administrative independence, as seems was the case of Lova (1) and Meggiaro (6).

Section D. Sites in the mountains

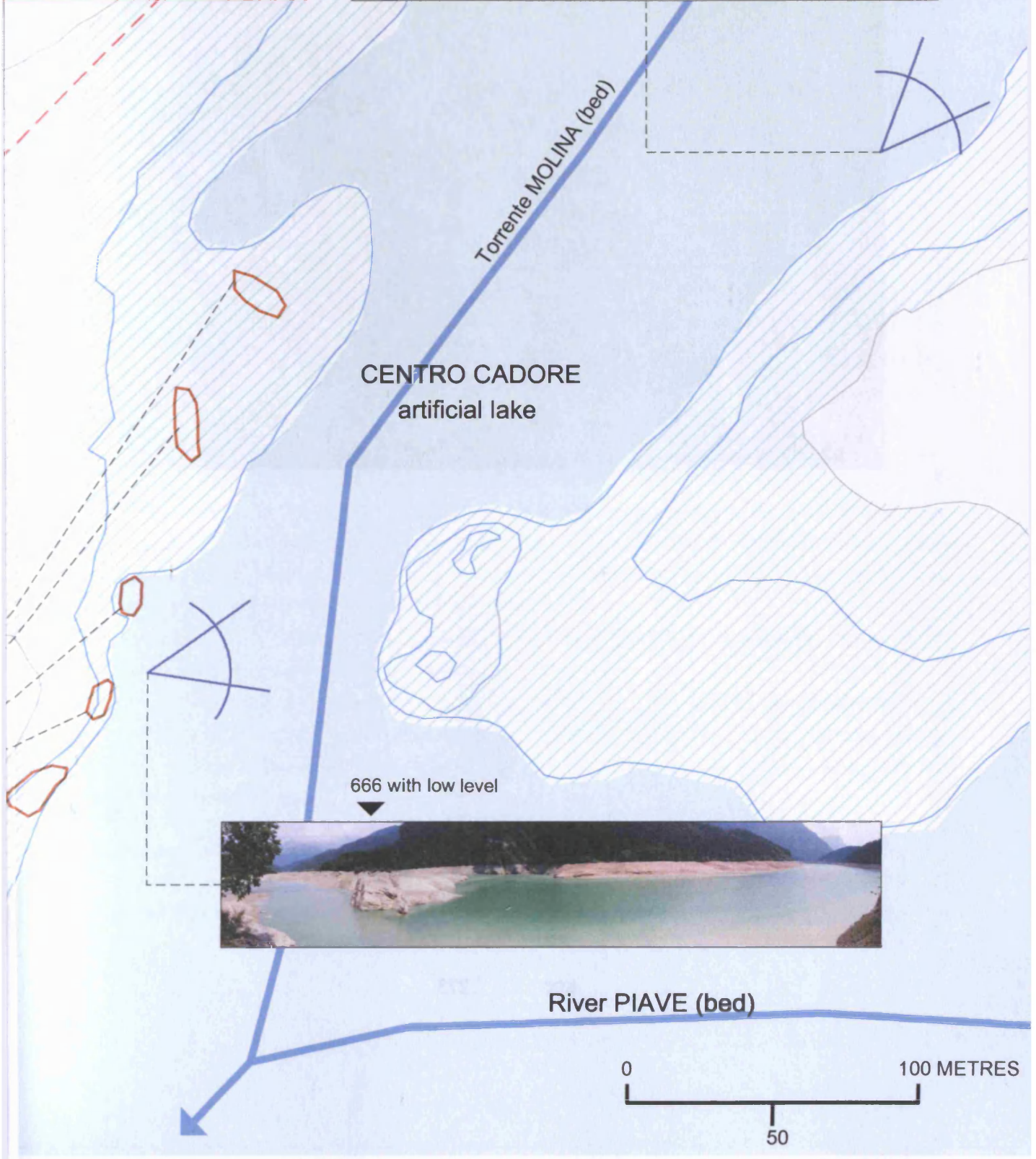
This section reports the fieldwork results of the northernmost section of my study area- the Subalpine- Alpine region occupied by the province of Belluno and bordering with Austria. It will present an individual assessment of three votive deposits and attempt a cross-comparison of these diverse sacred places: I will attempt to interpret their context in light of the types of votives that were dedicated, their landscape settings and their positioning along transhumance and cross-alpine communication routes.



Figure 5D.1. The mountains in the Belluno province



45 Lagole



D1) Lagole di Calalzo (45)



The map on the right shows the location of the Lagole di Calalzo in the Alps, in the heart of the mountainous, wooded district of the upper Piave valley, in the Italian region (the "SUD") where borders with Austria, and it is also an area for the so-called "Tiroli" with having the Alps. I will expand on this later with a brief history of the area's remarkable roads below.

Lagole di Calalzo and Lagole are famous for natural hot springs, exploited by a series of hotels and spas in the area.

The local area has also proved rich in archaeological remains in the last few years, with numerous finds at the site of Calalzo (19), Cavarzere and Fossale, and in the area of the Lagole di Calalzo (19), Lagole di Calalzo and Vado (19).

Local Information

The Lagole di Calalzo has attracted in the 19th and 20th centuries the attention of the public, who have been attracted by the natural beauty of the area, which is now becoming



Figure 5D.2. The frozen streams of Lagole. All photographs by author unless otherwise stated

Landscape context

Lagole (map D1 and figure above) is situated in the Comune of Calalzo di Cadore in the Dolomiti Alps, in the context of the mountainous, wooded district of the upper Piave valley. Lagole is in the Cadore region (fig. 5D.1), whose Northern end borders with Austria, and is positioned en route to the so-called "Noric" area beyond the Alps. I will expand on the issue of arterial trans-Alpine communication routes below.

The localities of Calalzo and Lagole are famous for mineral-rich hot springs, exploited by a number of hotels and spas in the area.

The local area has also proved increasingly rich in archaeology pertaining to the Bronze and Iron ages, with cemetery nuclei at Mel di Cadore (49), Cavarzano and Pozzàle, and isolated votive finds from Vallesella di Domegge (44), Lozzo di Cadore and Valle (48) (Pellegrini 1984: 10).

Background information

The shrine of Lagole was excavated in the 1940s and 1950s by Frescura and De Lotto, who recovered a wealth of bronze artefacts pertaining to a cult place, such as laminae depicting

horses and abstract motifs, dozens of bronzetti (see figure 5D.3) portraying warriors in Northern (Alpine) panoply, as well as hundreds of ladle handles and bowls (fig. 5D.4), many of which bore votive inscriptions in the Venetic script of Lagole (De Lotto 1961: 5 ff.; Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992: 49); the corpus of inscriptions from Lagole is second only to Este Baratella in its volume and richness.



Figure 5D.3. Bronzetto of warrior from Lagole

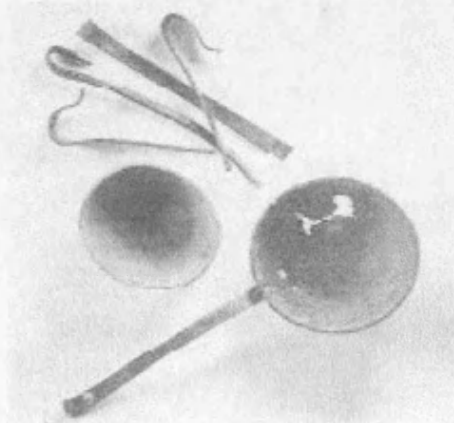


Figure 5D.4. Ladles from Lagole. From Fogolari and Gambacurta 2001

Giulia Fogolari argues that the spatial layout of the Lagole shrine consisted of a sacred area (*temenos*) probably located in a woodland clearing, and that animal sacrifice on makeshift or perishable altars was practised, alongside the dedication of votive objects and ritual libations (Fogolari 2001: 30). She suggests that, inferring from the steep, almost vertical nature and position of the archaeological strata in a particular spot, there would have been a steep ridge or escarpment whence religious officials would have thrown downhill animal remains and votives, for them to roll and naturally accumulate at a lower point.

Marinetti offers an interpretation of the deity names *Trumus*, *Trumusijate-*, and *Sainate-* where '-ate' and '-ati' could refer to a topographical entity, a belonging to a place or geographically-defined group, similarly to the Roman toponym of *Altinas*, *Altinati* (Marinetti 2001 in Fogolari and Gambacurta: 66). According to Marinetti, the deity's name would thus comprise a place name referring to a local community's name, hence indicating 'the name of the deity presiding over the local community'= *Trumusiata/i* (Marinetti 2005: 66 ff.). I am sympathetic with this topographic reading, although it is one of the many possible translations of the theonyms and of their attributes, and a problematic one at that. See Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006 for a more recent interpretation of the Venetic inscriptions from Lagole.

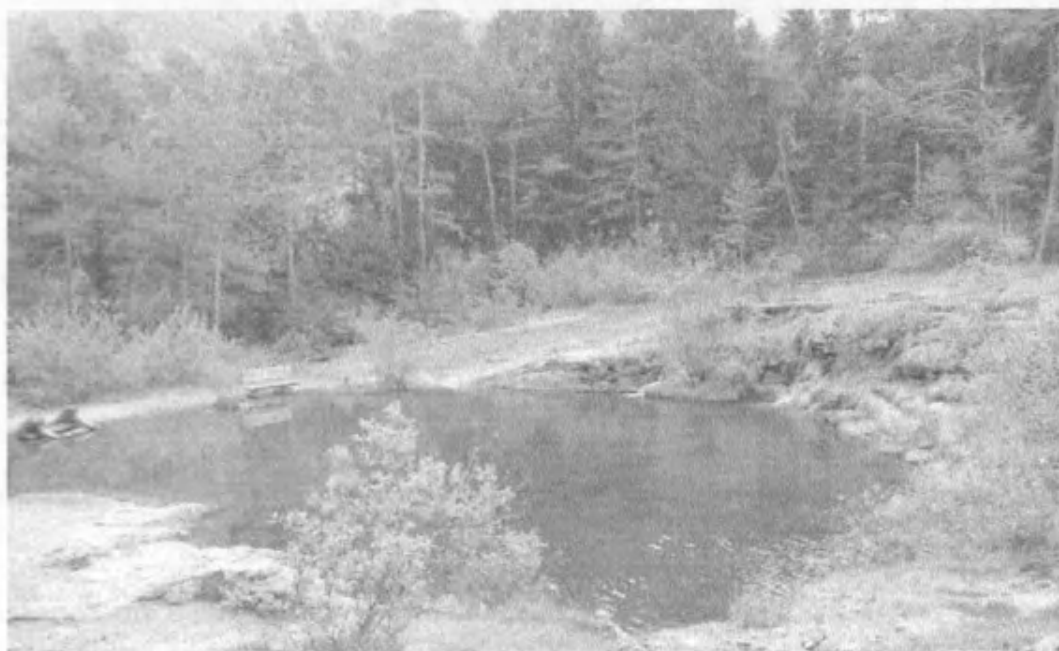


Figure 5D.5. Lagole in spring

Fieldwork

Although the ritual area proper is situated in the woodland surrounding the path leading from the village to the lakes, a modern creation to promote local tourism, the old maps used by excavators De Lotto and Frescura show a watery area, riddled with streams, underwater caves and natural lakes fed by the many springs; the earliest map I could find, the one drawn by Frescura in 1949, clearly indicates the positioning of the excavated area in relation to local landscape features such as the lakes, the springs, the caves (interestingly called "Caverne de le Langanes", see below) and the chalk quarries ("gessifera" and "cava"): see fig. 5D.6.

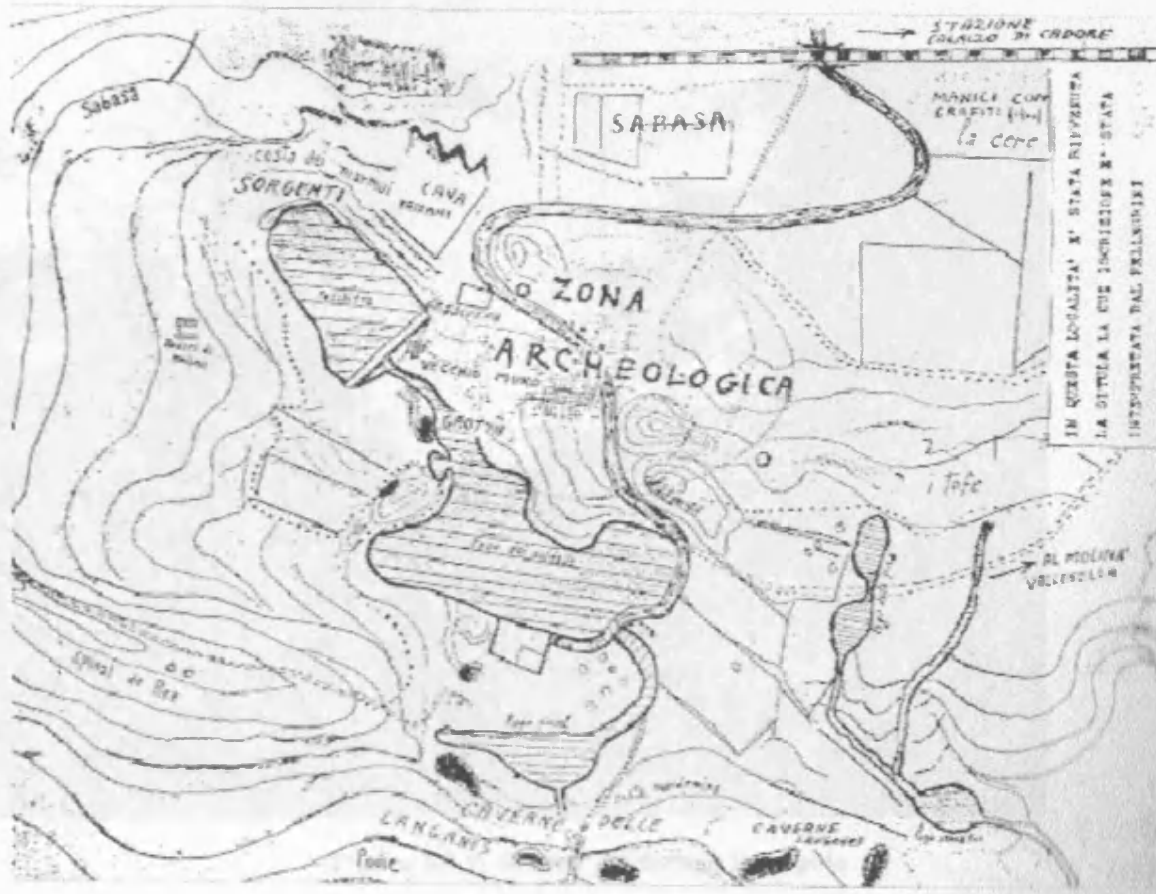


Figure 5D.6. De Lotto's map of the site of Lagole showing the underwater caves and springs (De Lotto 1961)

I conducted my fieldwork assessment both at the original findspot of the votive objects among the trees and in the lake area below, because the water element is the key feature in any attempt to interpret the cult place of Lagole, and Frescura's map shows that prior to the

creation of the artificial waterfalls and small lake network there was a substantial lake in place already, linked with the major Lago di Centro Cadore to the Northeast, along whose shores the other alleged sacred spot of Vallesella is located, and with the Lago di Auronzo at its northernmost end (where Monte Calvario is located).

Lagole is a beautifully evocative place. On a winter day (figs. 5D.7, 5D.9) the ice on the creek's surface is evocative and suggests a magical quality of water, which would have normally been perceived as running and fluid. We can imagine the watery enchantment of the place itself before it was modified, and the even purer quality of the air.



Figure 5D.7. Wintry landscape in Lagole

My feeling is that the specialness and liminality of the watery element and the purifying effects of mineral springs are even more significant in their specific geographical context, namely a boundary⁹, an en route location witnessing the passage of a number of individuals

⁹ The boundary and passage element of this location is given by its positioning on a trans-Alpine route into Austria.

from regions both below and beyond the Alps, and possibly from the Slovenian and Carnic regions to the East.

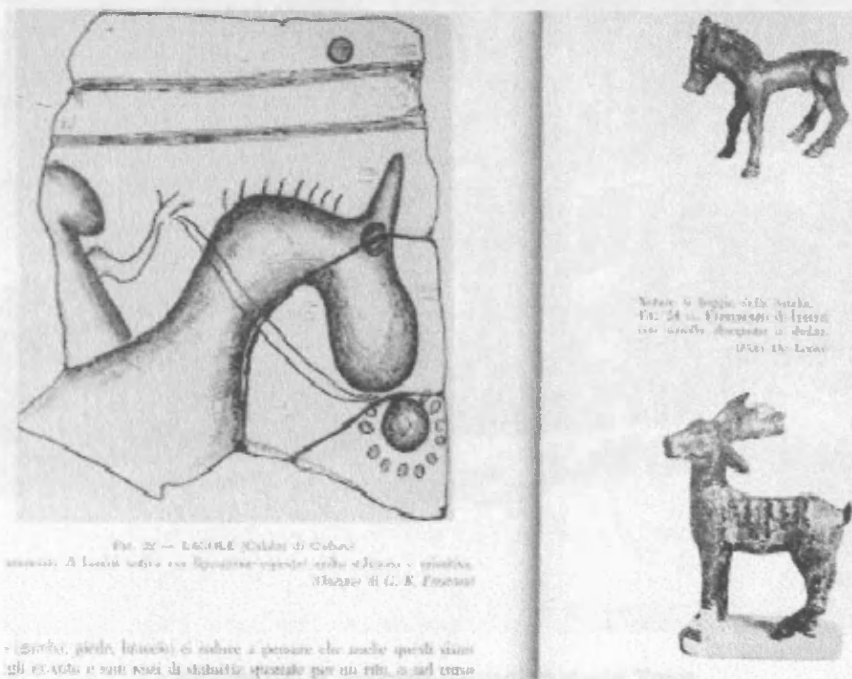


Figure 5D.8. Bronzetti from Lagole. From De Lotto 1961.

Sacrifice and banquets could have occurred on a smaller scale, or on special occasions in which people from the now lost settlements around Lagole or the pilgrims visiting this place would have gathered and performed rites at this special location in nature. This fact is substantiated by the vast number of charred animal bones found at this sacred place. (Capuis 1993: 99 ff.; Gangemi, G. 2003b: 89).

Material culture

One interpretation of the word "teuta", encountered 5 times in inscriptions from Lagole, translates it as "community" (Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992: 50 ff.; Marinetti 2001b). However, it seems a bit risky to stress the community/communal element in a context where no settlement data for the entire area, bar Mel (50), are known and where the predominant character of the offerings and inscriptions refers to individual acts of dedication.



Figure 5D.9. Frozen Laghetto delle Tose



Figure 5D.10. The stream in winter

The nature of the site today is that of a sheltered place, in a clearing, near the streams that feed into the lakes, one of which was called "the soldiers' lake" (*Lago dei soldade*, see again De Lotto's map - fig. 5D.6 above) due to the number of warrior bronzetti found in it before it was redeveloped into an artificial waterfall system that lends the place an enchanted fairytale atmosphere. It could very well be, then that the cult practice at Lagole had at least two elements, both linked with the healing powers of water, but pertaining to different types of worshippers, visiting the locale with different agendas: a handful of inscribed bronzetti of warriors in northern panoply, whose body is the place of inscription, refer to the passing of locally-appointed Alpine officers (guarding boundaries?) who wanted to give gifts to the deity of the woods and propitiate a safe crossing of the passes and into the Alps, and threw their images into the lake or into wells; however, the majority of inscriptions have been found on ladle handles and on laminae, likely to indicate the presence of travellers who probably wanted to secure their health, that of their families and of their livestock: they would have partaken of libations and inscribed their prayers on the drinking implements, the ladles, which were then ritually broken and thrown in the lake after drinking the holy water.

Both "classes", as it were, of worshippers, had the common goal of obtaining well-being or healing and used the same means of ensuring their prayers reached the deity or deities: the throwing of their "message" in the water of Lagole, possibly after drinking it or bathing in it (therapeutic qualities), the special water where mythic being(s) could receive their gift and grant their wishes.

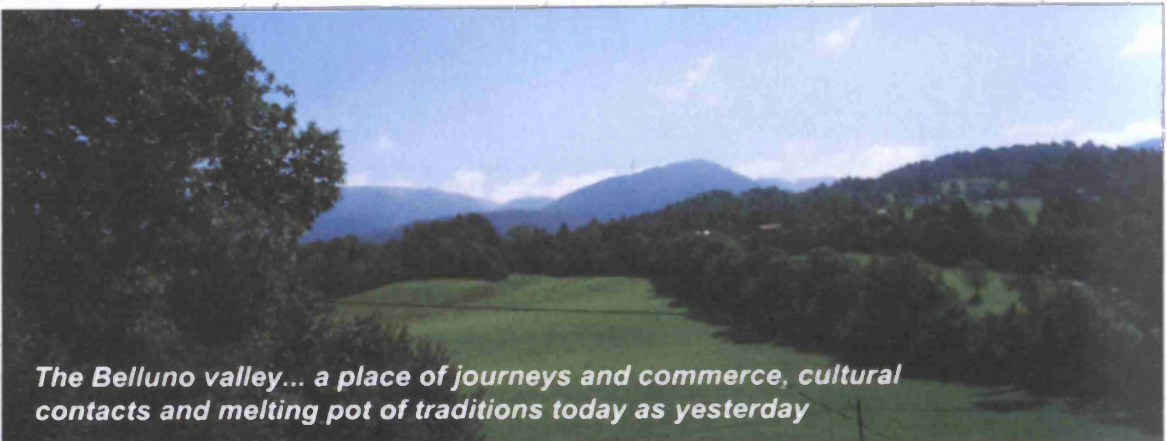
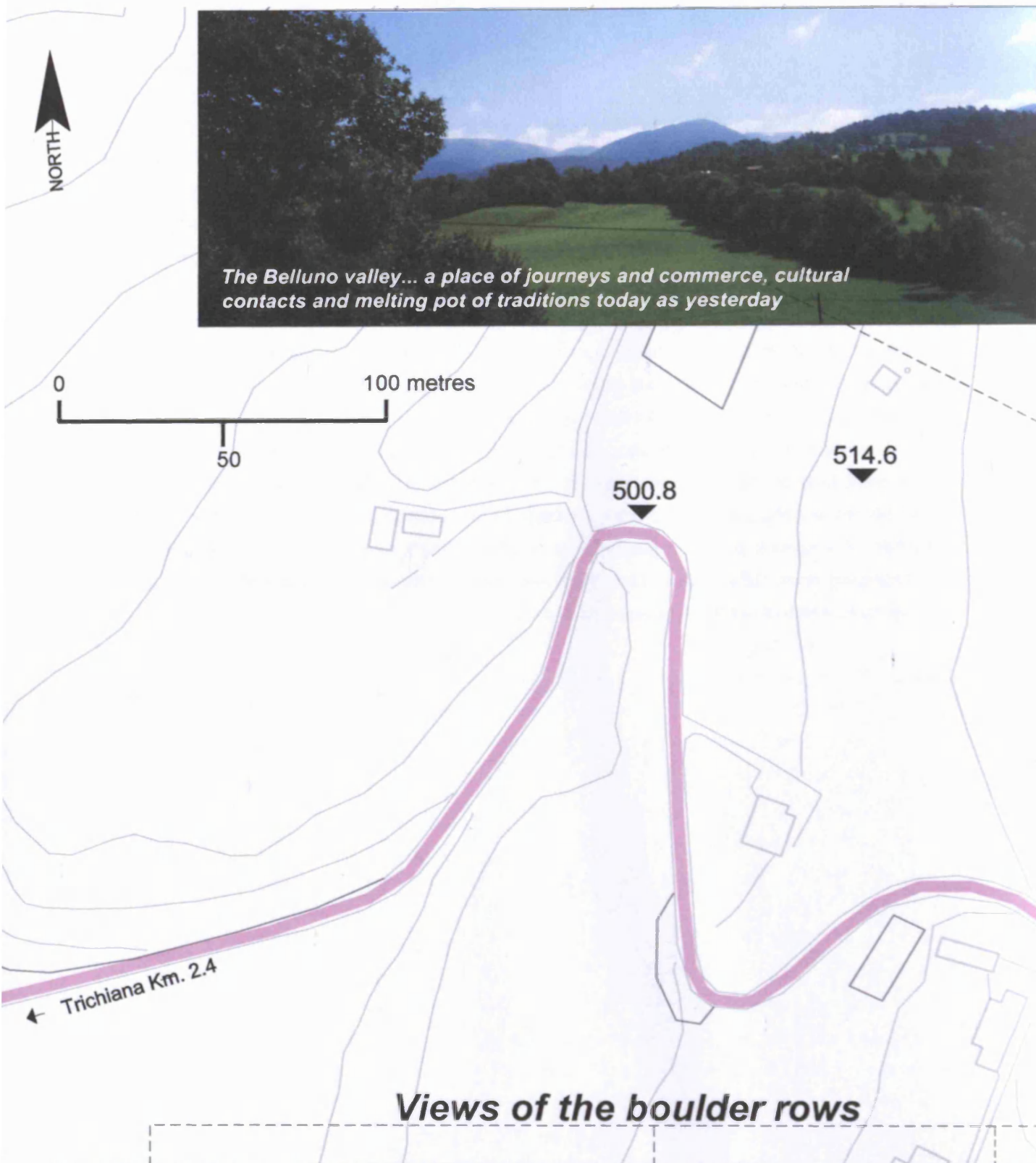
The place is not, and never was, immune from its own fairy tales: local lore speaks of aquatic nymphs inhabiting the woods and underwater caves at Lagole, either known as the *Anguane*, *Langanes* or *Longane* (see appendix 3), aquatic beings who granted people good health and prosperity, but could also play tricks on them. The female connotation of the legend is interesting, as the Venetic deity of Lagole is impossible to ascribe to a gender or even number, although in the Roman period the local god was Apollo the healer. Whitehouse and Wilkins (Whitehouse and Wilkins 2006: 536) believe the gender of the Lagole deity Trumusiate/Tribusiati is likely to be male, owing to the exclusive occurrence of male figurines in the votive repertoire and the subsequent "interpretation" as Apollo. I will describe in greater detail the legend of the Anguane in Appendix 3.

The link between landscape and votive objects is less than obvious. The fact that the votive objects do not depict visible landforms such as peaks, despite Lagole's mountainous context, may indicate two things: firstly, that the predominant and significant natural element was given by the water and the springs; secondly, that local and regional

worshippers celebrating cults at this location were so accustomed to rugged peaks and mountain tops that the height element was no longer intimidating, awe-inspiring, or special, as if encoded in their very biological setup, unavoidable part of their heritage and everyday lives, unlike people inhabiting the lower hilly landscapes of the plains and the piedmont.

Lastly, the connotation of Lagole as a cult place catering to more than one community, village, or even social group, could mean that local topography had little to do with the embodied experience of being there, as it was more of a ritual "stop-over", a transient place rather than a settled local cult place or a perennial landmark... Lagole and its magic springs may very well have been a locale of sacred and political pilgrimage serving communities and groups from both sides of the Alps.

The importance or significance of the sacred element of water is furthermore stressed by the total lack of monumentalisation by the Romans: it is likely that, similarly to other sacred places in nature such as Monte Altare (40) or Bocca Lorenza (34), they perceived the alteration of a special place as sacrilegious by disrupting its *genius loci* (Grimal 1986: 170 ff.; Steunding et al. 1897: 145, 184; Matthews and Matthews 2004), despite continuing to worship syncretised versions of age-old deities.

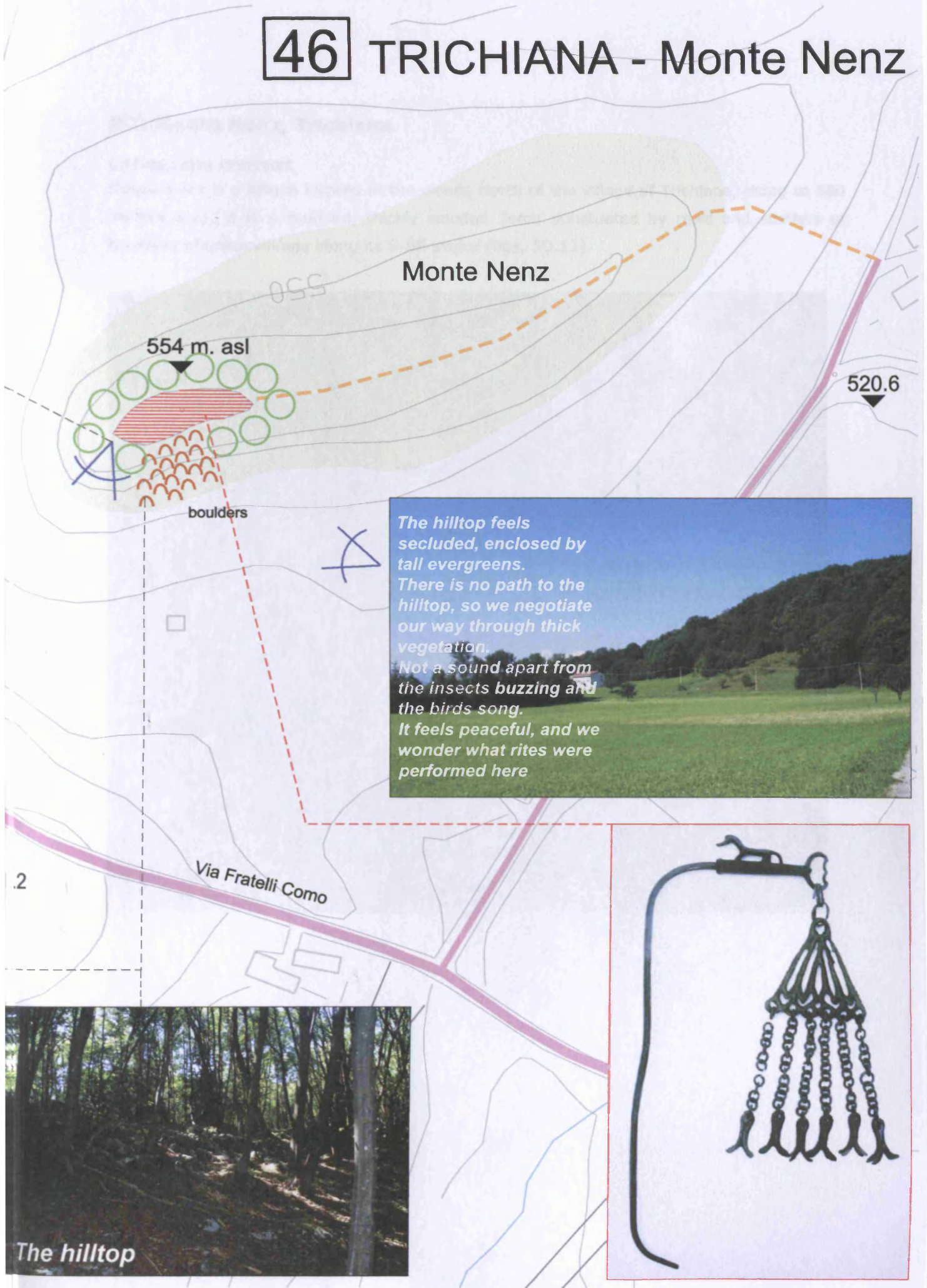


The Belluno valley... a place of journeys and commerce, cultural contacts and melting pot of traditions today as yesterday

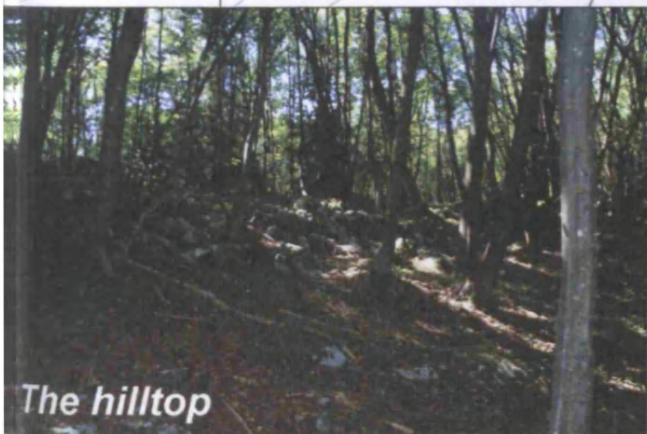
Views of the boulder rows



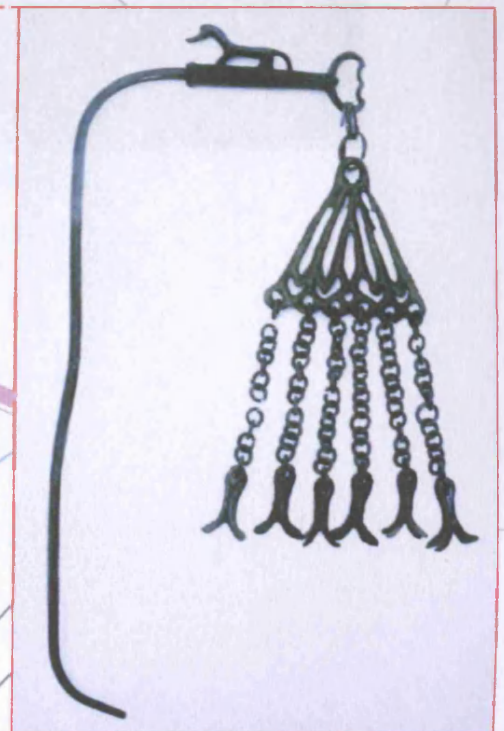
46 TRICHIANA - Monte Nenz



The hilltop feels secluded, enclosed by tall evergreens. There is no path to the hilltop, so we negotiate our way through thick vegetation. Not a sound apart from the insects buzzing and the birds song. It feels peaceful, and we wonder what rites were performed here



The hilltop



D2) Monte Nenz, Trichiana

Landscape context

Monte Nenz is a hillock located in the woods North of the village of Trichiana, rising to 580 metres a.s.l. It is a rounded, thickly wooded dome punctuated by rows and scatters of boulders of unknown age along its S-SE sector (figs. 5D.11).



Figure 5D.11 The context of Monte Nenz

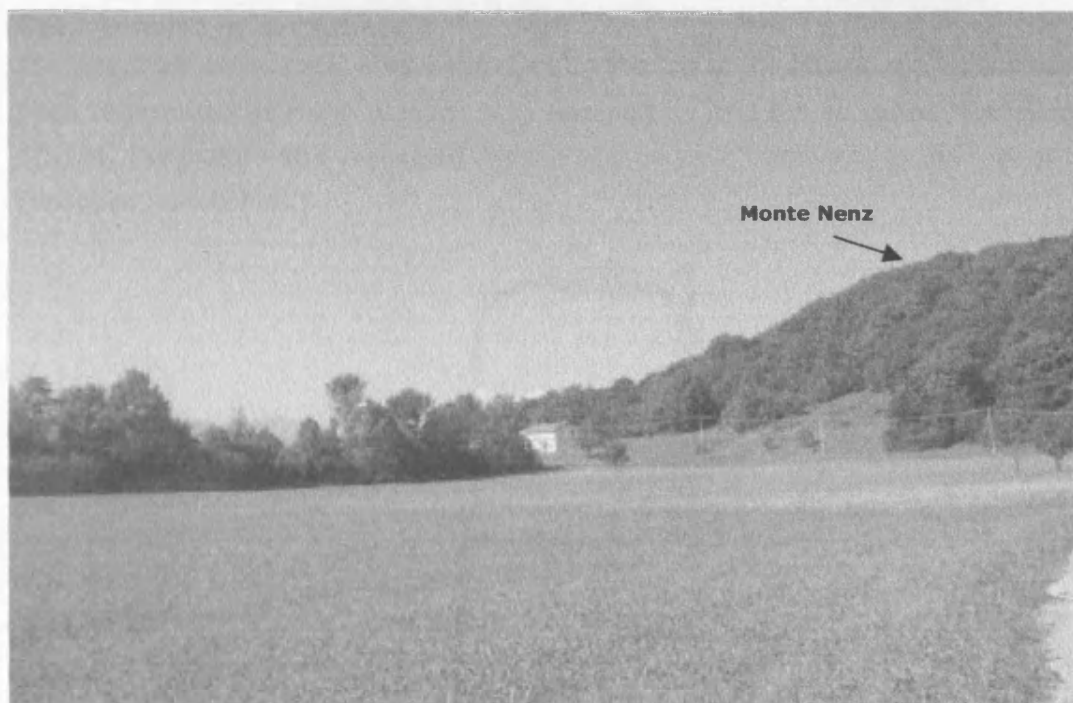


Figure 5D.11. Monte Nenz, Noal di Trichiana, Belluno. All photographs by author



Figure 5D.12. The slopes of Monte Nenz

Background information

The Soprintendenza excavated a ritual pit on the top of the hillock and unearthed what have been interpreted as ritual objects: Iron Age pottery and the so called "Trichiana key" (fig. 5D.13). Excavators also recovered Bronze Age ceramic fragments at the foot of the hillock. (Padovan pers.comm.)

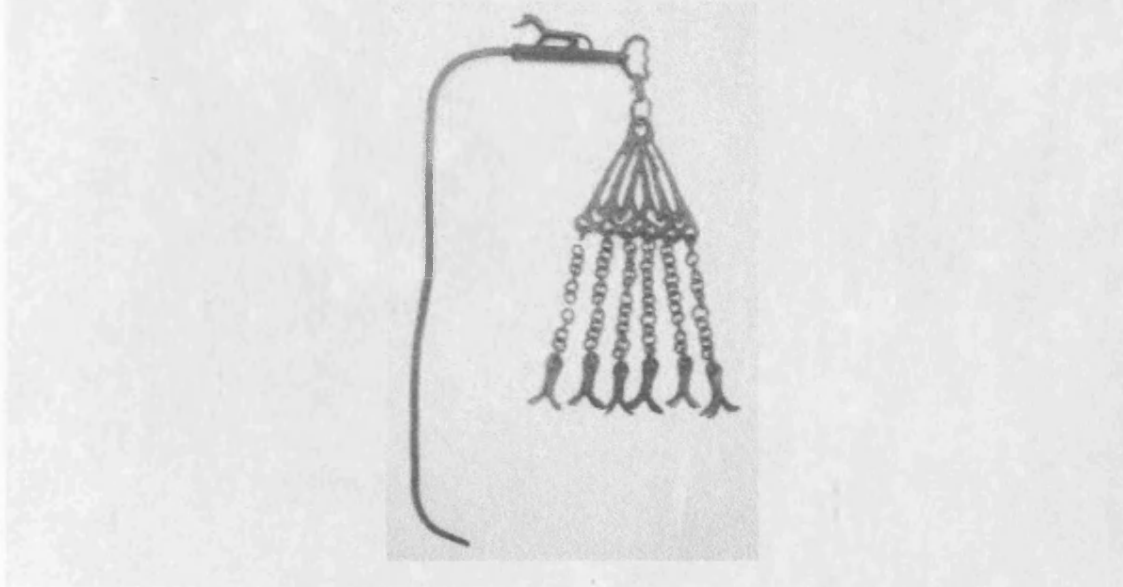


Figure 5D.13. The Trichiana key (from Malnati and Gamba 2003)

Fieldwork

I had the good fortune of having the original excavator Eugenio Padovan as part of my fieldwork team.

The hill is relatively low (fig. 5D.11), does not have proper paths leading up it, and the climb takes approximately 5 to 10 minutes through the pine trees and thick undergrowth.

It might have been less thickly wooded in the Iron Age, as it was intensively reforested sixty years ago (Padovan pers. comm.); however, the local environment for the whole of the Cansiglio and Belluno areas has been established as populated by evergreens since the last glaciation (Padovan pers. comm., Peresani 1998: 20).

The hill slope and top have many scattered stones that seem to form rows starting in the upper slopes and coiling up towards the middle of the flat, roomy, wooded top (figs. 5D.14-16).



Figure 5D.14. Boulders on the slopes of the hillock

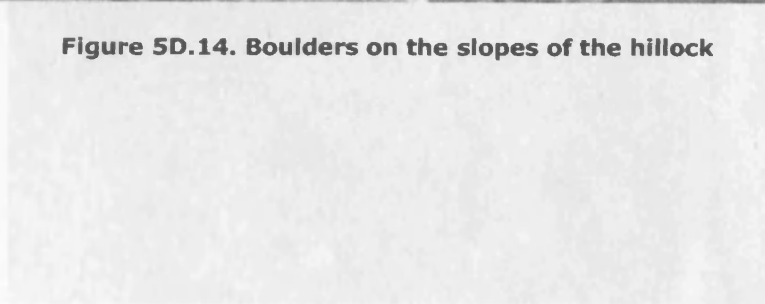


Figure 5D.15. Boulders near the top

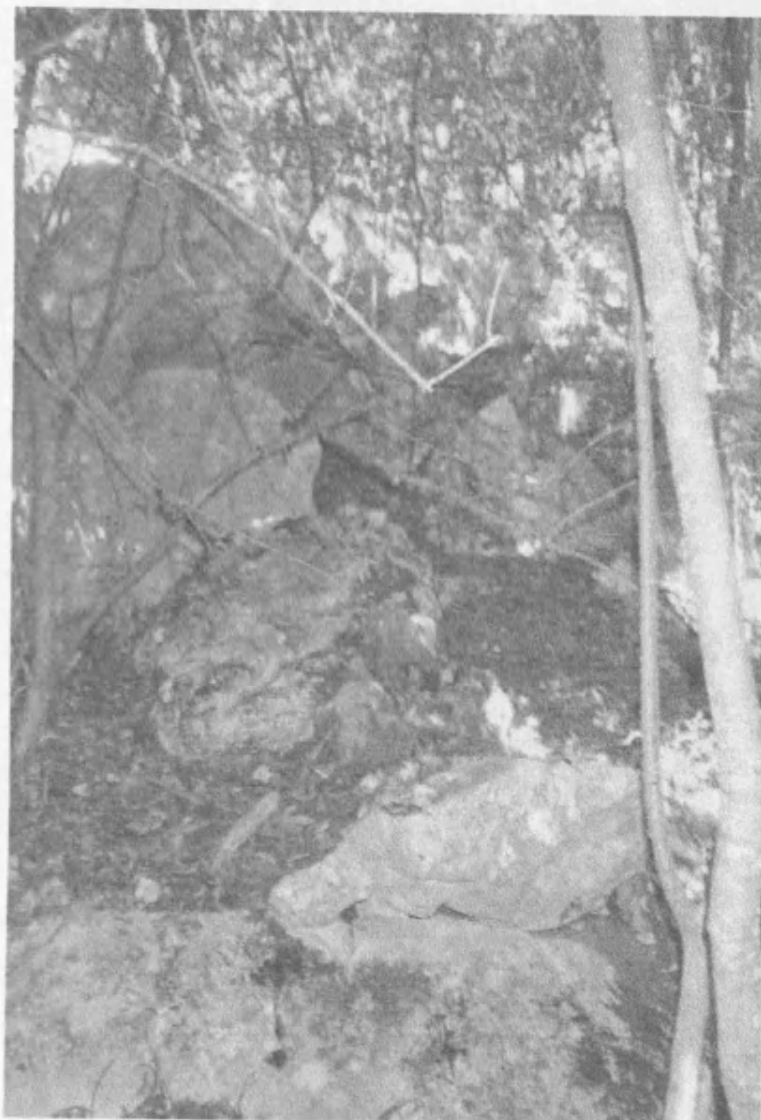


Figure 5D.15. Boulders near the top

The location remains that of the floodplain deposit of Vallancroftagh near Rabbins, a hillside in the foreground of the upper Eire valley situated along a symbolic route highlighted by burial plots and water deposits. I happened to carry out fieldwork in this part of the Marche during the course of a survey project run by Drs. Corinne Bea, John Pearce and Maria Perle.

While natural vegetation cover in the preceding period, this locale would have been quite prominent and would have dominated a good view of the valley.



Figure 5D.16. Boulders on the top

This location reminds me of the Picene votive deposit of Vallemontagnana near Fabriano, a hillock in the piedmont of the upper Esino valley situated along a symbolic route punctuated by burial places and votive deposits. I happened to carry out fieldwork in this part of the Marche during the course of a survey project run by Drs. Corinna Riva, John Pearce and Maria Pretzler.

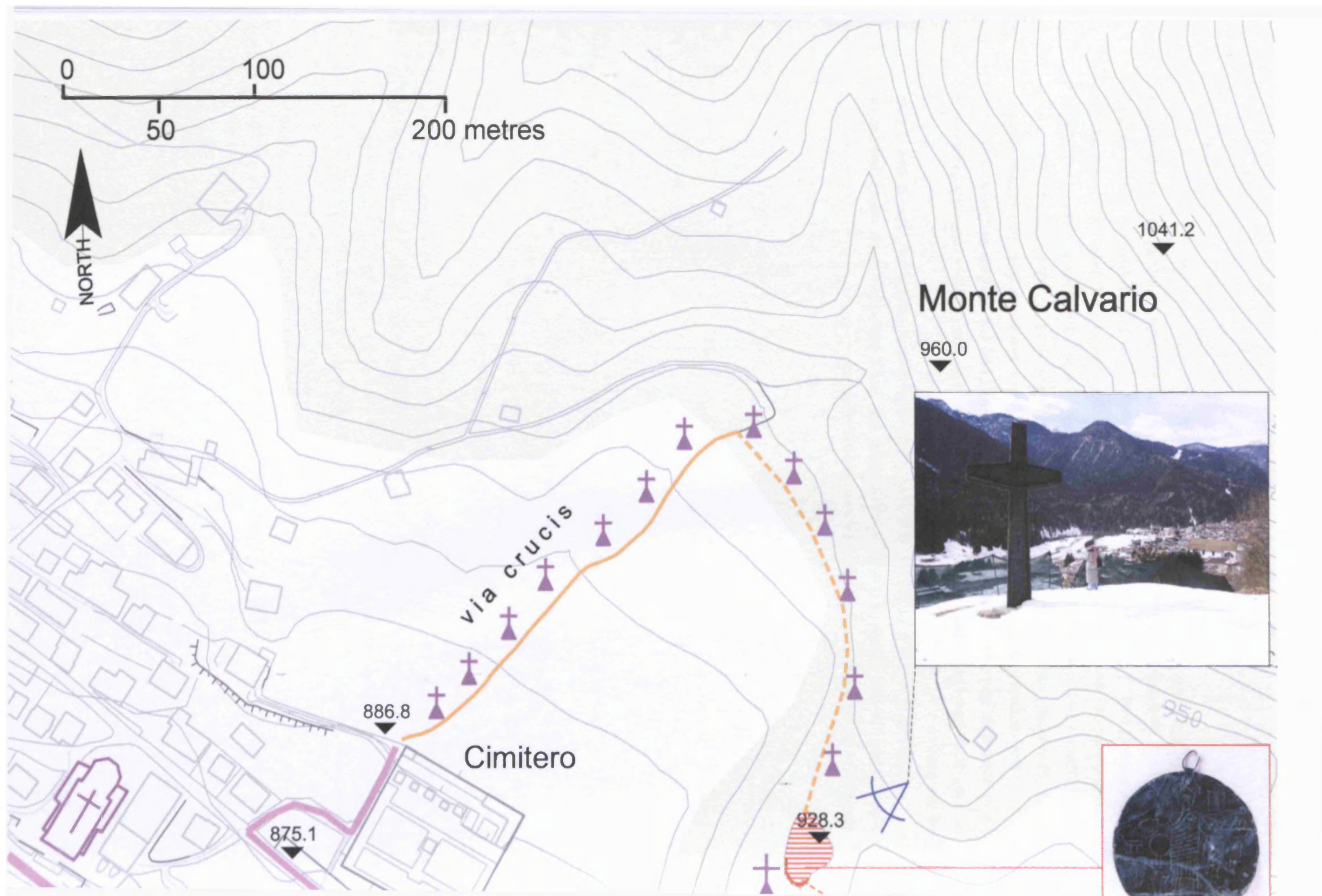
With minimal vegetation cover in the prehistoric period, this locale would have been quite prominent and would have dominated a good view over the valley.

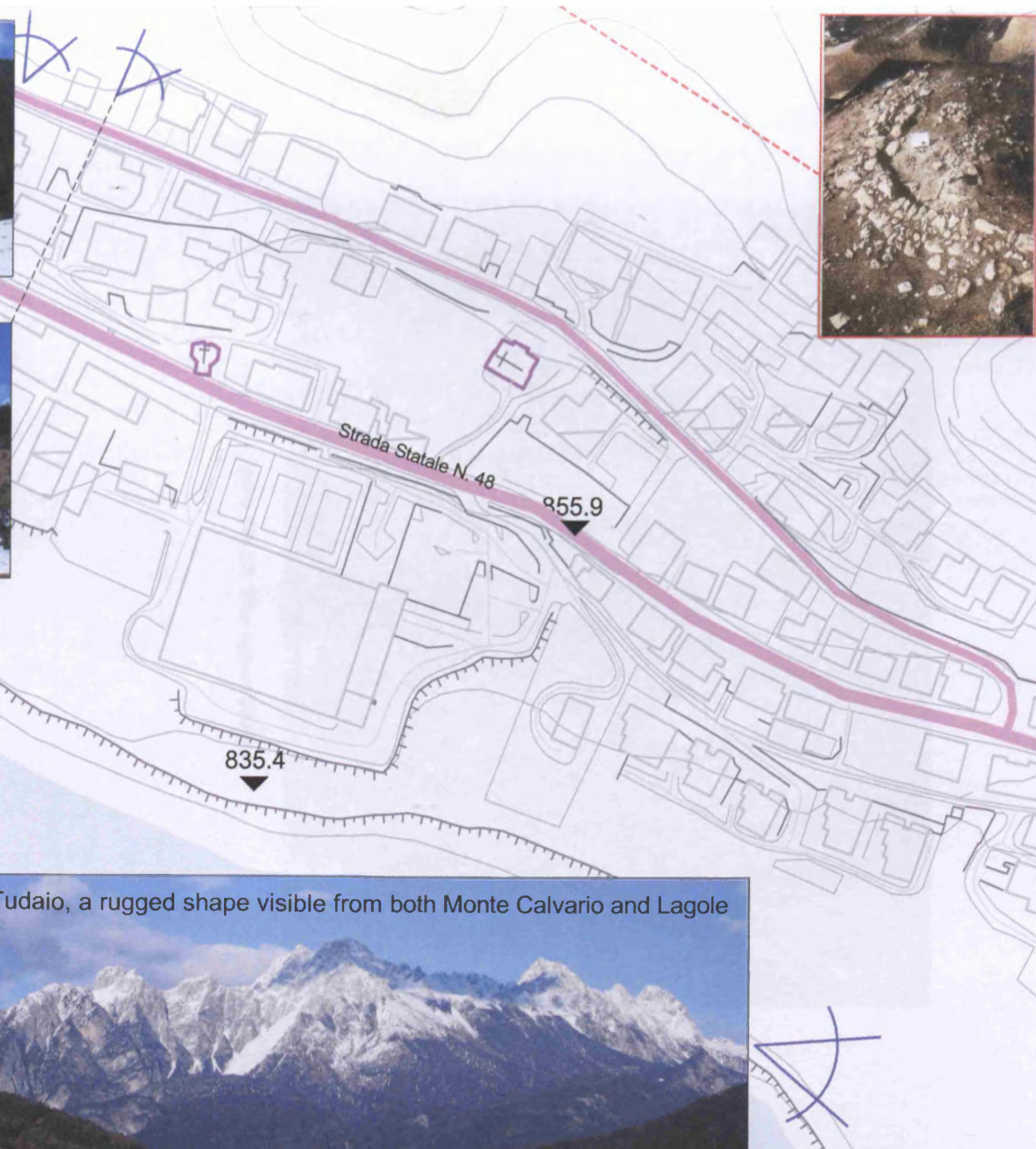
Material culture

This hillock was selected as the special spot in which to dedicate highly significant objects to an unnamed deity (the key). The "foreign" style of the so-called Hallstatt key seems to lend this anomalous votive deposit a wide scope of frequentation and awareness beyond the Alps. Other keys are encountered in the Venetic Iron Age: the keys portrayed on the so called Montebelluna discs, and keys in burials (Bonomi and Ruta Serafini 1994: 11-13).

The recovery of Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery seems to lend this locale a long-term use, or at any rate, a long-lived awareness by local and not so local people and groups. It was most certainly a sacred place in nature, and tied to the possibly funerary symbolism of the key.

Overall it is still a puzzle to archaeologists, who cannot decide whether it was a cult place proper or the result of a one-off dedication act, but I will attempt an interpretation of the site in its regional and local context in the next chapter.





L a k e

Monte Tudaio, a rugged shape visible from both Monte Calvario and Lagole

47 AURONZO

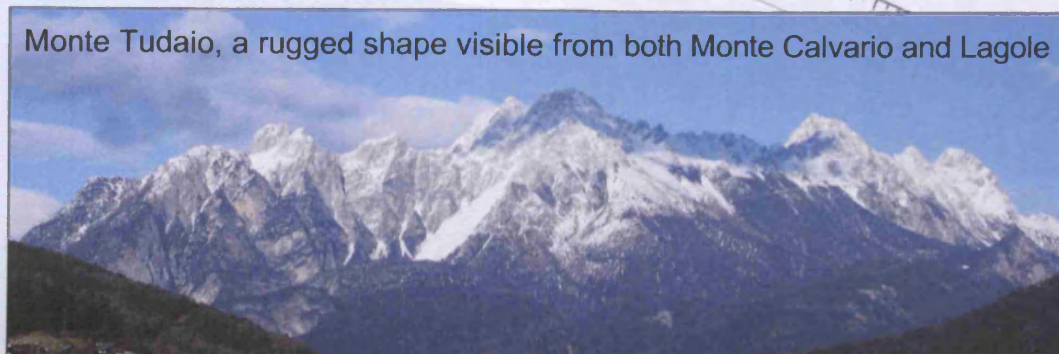




Figure 5D.17. The upper Cadore

D3) Monte Calvario

Landscape setting

Monte Calvario, reaching 960 m a.s.l. (3511 ft), is located in the northern Cadore, in the town and village hinter of Auronzo on the Lago di Auronzo (Fig. 5D.17), very near the Austrian border. The site location is in fact on a hilltop positioned near the local cemetery, north of the main lake, terrace, roughly at the foot of Mt. Calvario, more specifically on its SE slope. It is a sitting on-top partly covered by trees (Fig. 5D.19).

The Auronzo valley is visually dominated by the rugged Mt. Tufano to the East (opposing former slope) that can also be seen from Loggia, 9 km SE, to the South (Fig. 5D.22).

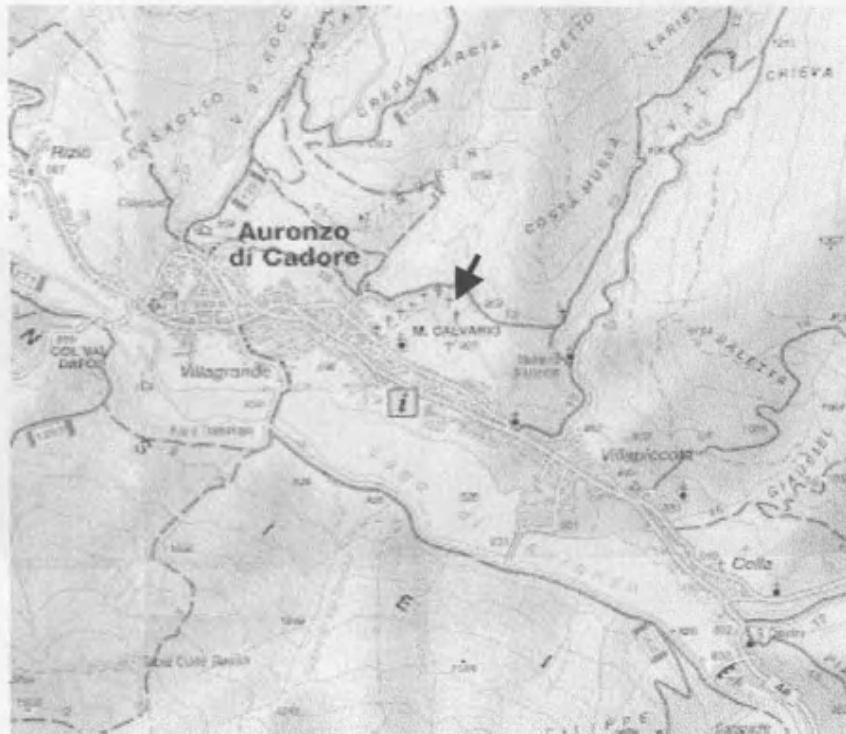


Figure 5D.18. Monte Calvario, Auronzo di Cadore

D3) Monte Calvario

Landscape setting

Monte Calvario, reaching 960 m a.s.l. circa (5D.18), is located in the northern Cadore, in the town and skiing resort of Auronzo on the Lago di Auronzo (fig. 5D.17), very near the Austrian border. The site location is in fact on a hillock positioned near the local cemetery, north of the main town centre, roughly at the foot of Mt Calvario, more specifically on its SE slope. It is a jutting out spur partly covered by trees (fig. 5D.19).

The Auronzo valley is visually dominated by the rugged Mt Tudaio to the East [*imposing lamina shape*] that can also be seen from Lagole, 9 km ca. to the South (fig. 5D.22).



Figure 5D.19. The site of Monte Calvario. All photographs by author unless otherwise stated

Figure 5D.20

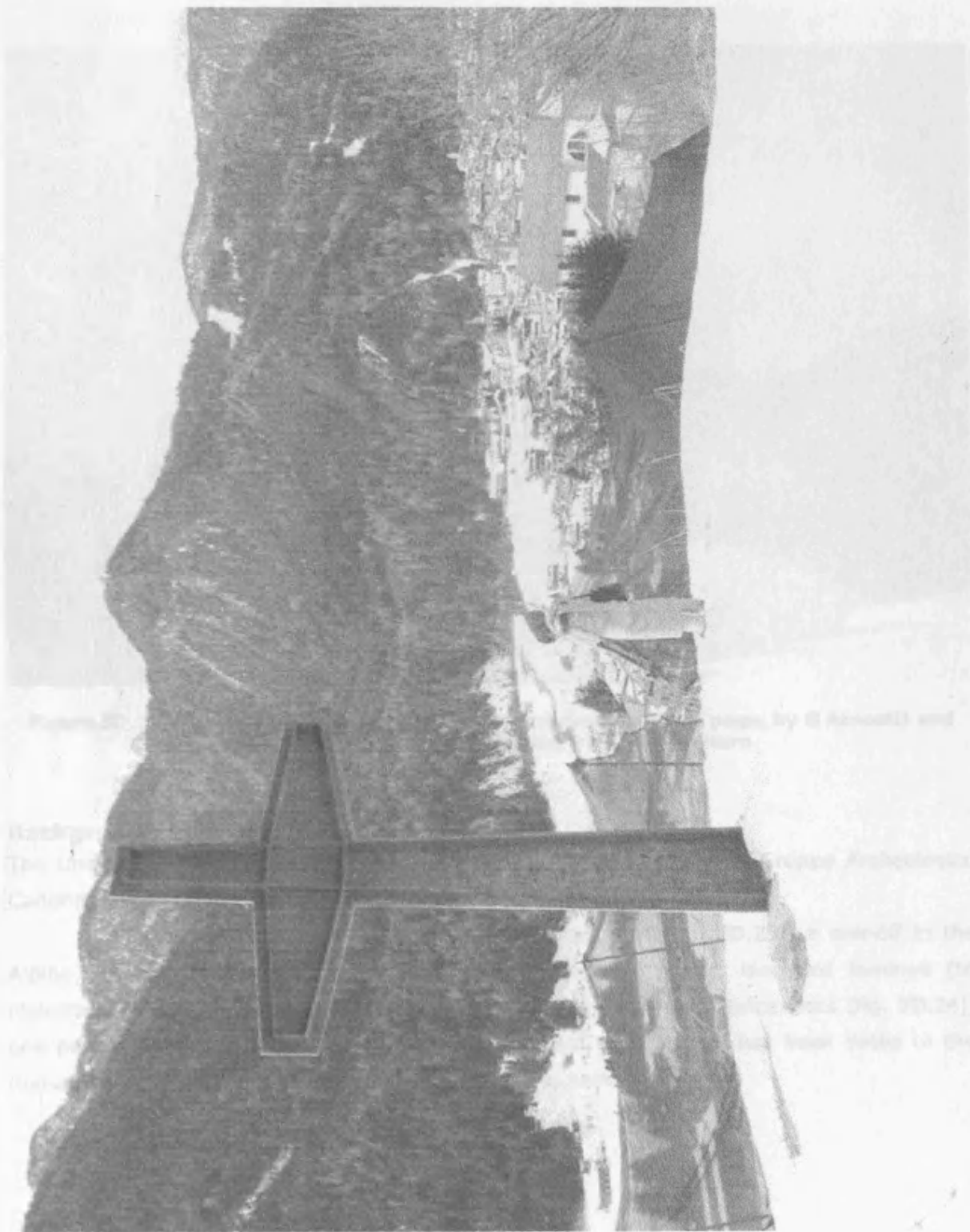


Figure 5D.20



Figure 5D.21. View from the site of the Calvario shrine (previous page, by G Arnosti) and view of the top of the mountain from the Cimitero

Background information

The University of Padua and the Soprintendenza, aided by the local Gruppo Archeologico Cadorino, excavated the site in 2000-2005.

The team uncovered the remains of a retaining wall (fig. 5D.23), a one-off in the Alpine context, and ritual pits containing coins, animal bones, inscribed laminae (to *Maiestator*-, ambiguous local deity or deities) and two decorated bronze discs (fig. 5D.24), one pertaining to the Iron Age phase of site use and another that has been dated to the Roman period (Gangemi 2003c: 101; Zandegiacomo pers. comm.)

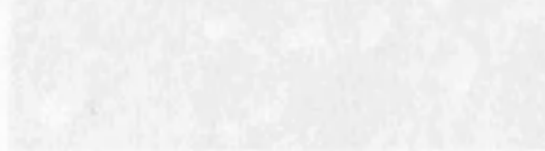


Figure 5D.23 The retaining wall at Monte Calvario. From Rinaldi & Tomber 2003



Figure 5D.22. The imposing and rugged shape of Monte Tudaio



Figure 5D.23. The retaining wall at Monte Calvario. From Malnati & Gamba 2003



Figure 5D.24. One of the Monte Calvario discs. From Malnati and Gamba 2003

Fieldwork

The hillock, the South-Est facing spur jutting out of Mt Calvario can be reached on foot with ease and the climb takes approximately six to ten minutes when snowbound, maybe three to five when dry.

Although it is prominent, jutting out from the side of the hill when viewed and approached from the south (the town side), [if so during the Iron Age], it is not a prominent location in relation to nearby hills and mountains.

At present the hillock is located 1 km west of iron rich hot springs and 3 km east of sulphurous hot springs, although it cannot be excluded that more springs, nearer to the location could have existed and been known in the past.

Local peoples seem to recognise the specialness of this mountain and worship God encased in nature, and they commemorate their dead nearby.

Monte Calvario is clearly a significant place with a long history of meanings and interpretations by the local people: out of the many available mountain spurs, ridges and hillocks, they chose to establish a Via Crucis in nature, with crosses appearing and disappearing through the trees, culminating on the very spot of the Romanisation 'temple'. Also at the foot of Monte Calvario, ca. 50 metres west, is the local Cimitero. Finally, the name itself is eloquent as to the 'sacred' connotations it has in popular local (and official Italian) topography.

The long history of the locality affects and permeates many phases of the life of people inhabiting these cold northern landscapes, and signifies their relationship with the sacred and symbolic as well as their interaction with nature and the land. The site itself is rather evocative, and assumes a sense of 'holiness' due to the crosses dotted along its slopes and leading to the top. However the locale is not positioned on the top of the higher hill to which the Calvario belongs: the "visibility from" factor was probably not paramount for selecting the location.

Material culture

The recovery of ladle handles, like at Lagole, seems to indicate sacred libations, and the presence of hot springs in the nearby mountains could corroborate the importance of water, not prominence, for this cult place.

One inscribed handle found in situ in a pit and dated to the 1st century AD bore a dedication in the Venetic script and language that led Marinetti infer that the Venetic language and alphabet was used for ritual inscriptions well into the Roman period: the "universal" adoption of Latin for cult inscriptions in the Venetic shrines had previously been hypothesized for the 2nd century BC (Zandegiacomo pers. comm.). The sacred objects themselves, among which one notices the striking absence of bronzetti, the common if not ubiquitous symbol of Venetic cults, indicates concerns with fertility and libations: the two discs depict nature rites and depict an androgynous figure surrounded by shoots and bunches of grapes, which gave local archaeologist and Archeoclub president Zandegiacomo the idea that the ladles could have been used to pour wine instead of water (Zandegiacomo pers. comm.)

Another type of votive, the Noric coins known as "oboli", of which 30 were found, seem to endorse the en route, boundary character of the cult place on Mt Calvario.

Lastly, traces of animal sacrifice, including dog remains found charred in a pit have parallels both in Monte Altare and Altino (Arnosti 2000: 20 ff.)

Overall the significance of this cult place seems to lie in its proximity to the transalpine Comelico pass as well as in the sanctity of nature, whether in the form of healing water or in the dedication of agricultural gifts to a deity presiding over the fertility of the land, perhaps as a *wishing well* against the frosty Cadore winter.



Figure 5D.25. Inscribed lamina from Monte Calvario. From Malnati and Gamba 2003

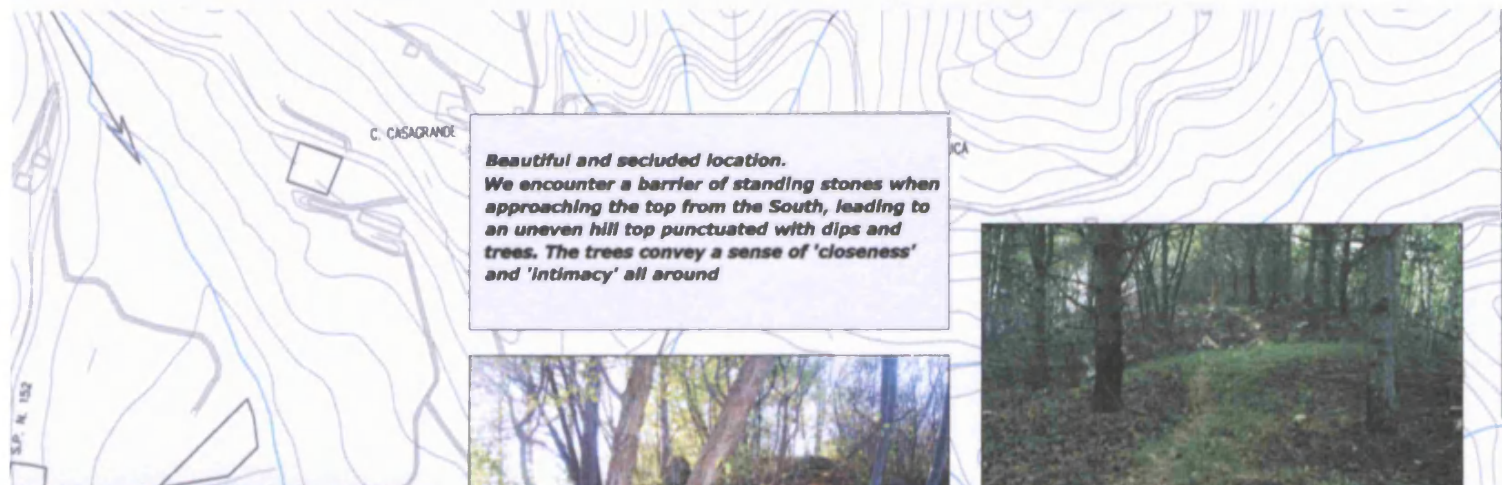
There remains to be ascertained if there was a corresponding settlement nearby. The lack of habitation data seems to suggest yet another transitory cult place like Lagole, not serving a particular community. Therefore the interpretation of this site as a "community-oriented" cult place, on the basis of the translation of "Maiestator" as found on the ladles as "magistrates", "authorities" (Gangemi 2003c: 101) seems somewhat far-fetched. The "Maiestator" were more likely to be local deities presiding over fertility and purification rituals involving water and/or wine.

Section E. "Oddities"

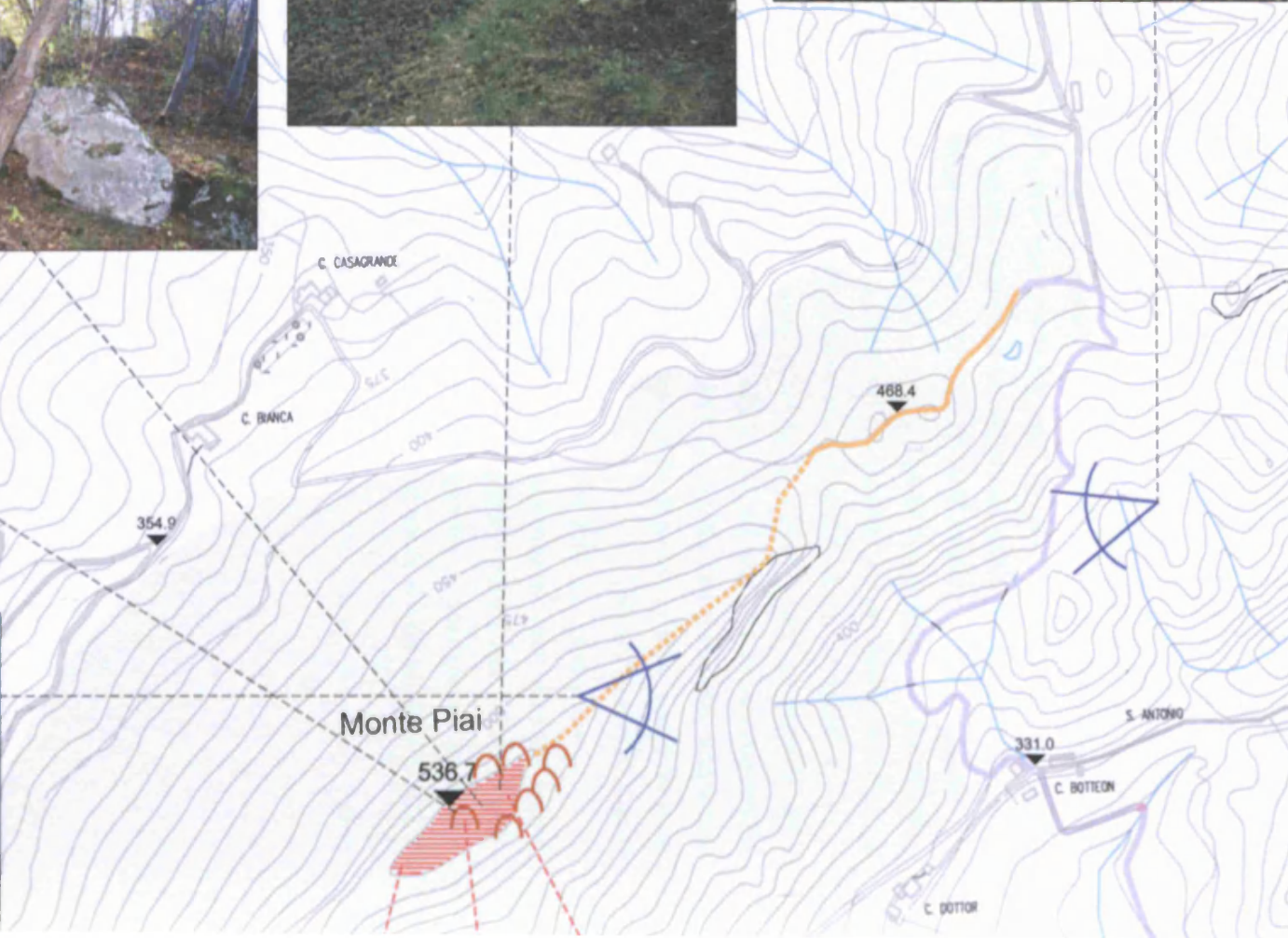
In the last part of my fieldwork report I shall present five case studies from a range of landscape contexts and periods. This section deals with five "oddities", that is sites that are "odd" in comparison to the previously encountered locales: one does not fall within a specific site category of use (Monte Piaia, 41), three are cemeteries (Montebelluna Via Cima Mandria -29, Este Benvenuti- 8 and Monte Dolada, 43) and another represents not one site alone but a cluster of urban votive deposits within Padua.

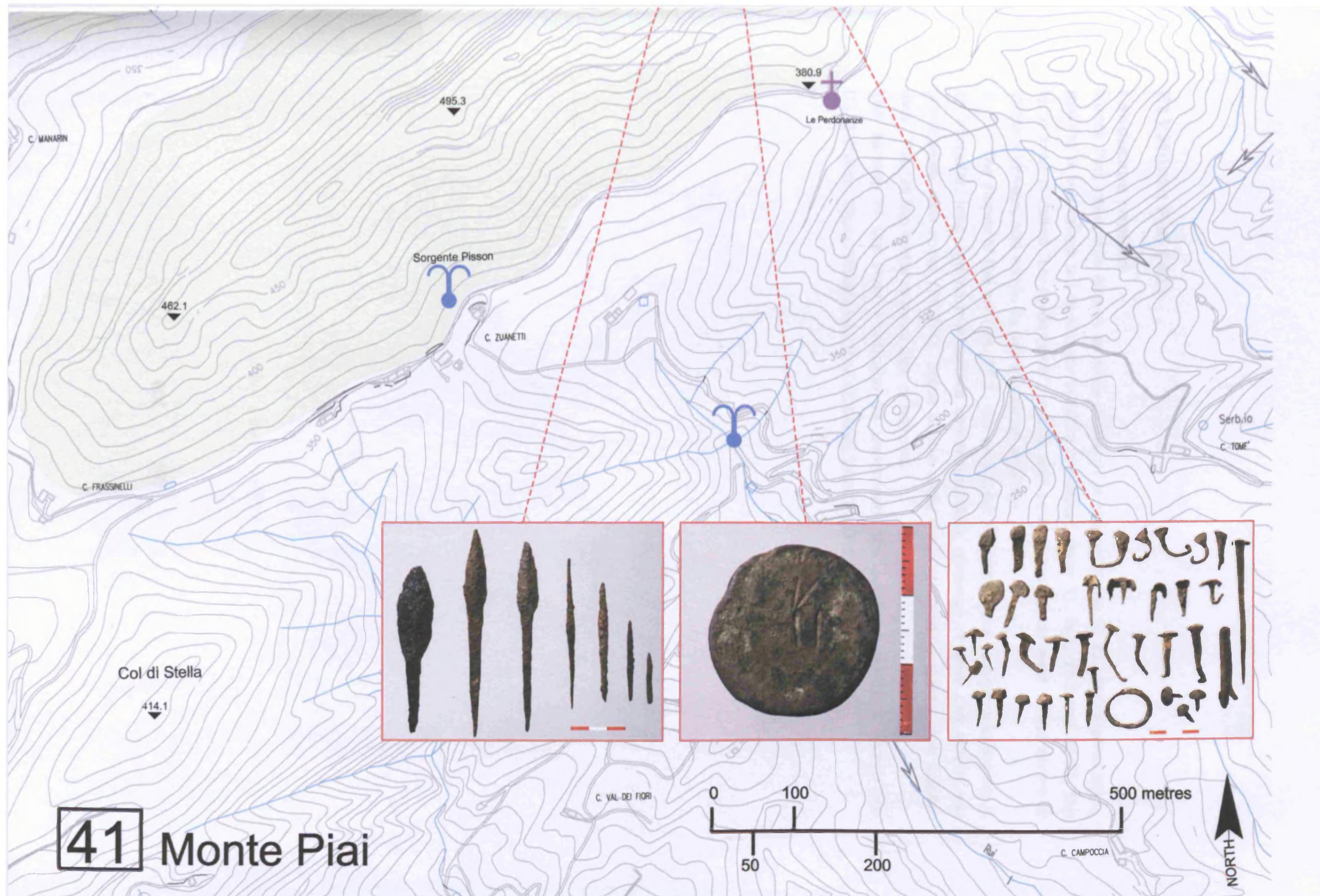
I chose to apply the standard methodology with which I assessed the main fifteen case studies to these "one off" sites in order to test the feasibility and flexibility of my interpretation model and its applications (the fieldwork form), and furthermore to identify any significant elements emerging from these non-standard locales that could be compared, or contrasted, with previously observed criteria pertaining to the positioning of sacred places in the Iron Age Veneto.

I will point out that my Padua case study, consisting of a number of "sites" in an urban context was essentially analysed in terms of distances, positioning and mutual relationships, not using photographs and description of individual sites. As a result of this "different" treatment, I will make inferences about all of the sites encompassed in the case study, based on impressions in the field and maps of the selected area.



*Beautiful and secluded location.
We encounter a barrier of standing stones when
approaching the top from the South, leading to
an uneven hill top punctuated with dips and
trees. The trees convey a sense of 'closeness'
and 'intimacy' all around*





41 Monte Piai

E1) Monte Piai (41)

Landscape context

Monte Piai, otherwise known as Colle Stella, is a tall hill rising to ca. 560 metres a.s.l., making it the tallest hill in the surrounding landscape (map E1, figs. 5E.1 and 5E.3). The local area is called "Le Perdonanze", a hilly part of the countryside west of the centre of Vittorio Veneto, and within its administrative bounds.

The slopes of the hill (fig. 5E.1) are very steep, in fact almost vertical, and the top is an irregular, long and narrow surface comprising thick coverage of trees and shrubs and punctuated with rocks (5E.3-4). Some of the rocks may be standing stones that toppled over. The hill top features three dips or hollows.

The springs of the river Monticano lie underneath the southern slopes of Monte Piai (<http://www.tragol.it/liberalabici/sub/itinerari/itinerario3-4.htm>).



Background: The landscape is a typical example of the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region, characterized by a mix of agricultural land and forested areas.

The map shows the location of Monte Piai/Perdonanze, which is a small village situated in the foothills of the Alps. The area is characterized by a mix of agricultural land and forested areas. The map also shows the location of several other villages in the area, including Tarzo, San Pietro di Fieletto, Refrontolo, Fregene, Fregene Lago, Sarmeola, Cappella Maggiore, Cordignano, Code Umberto, Orsago, and Godog di Sant'Urbano.



Figure 5E.1. Monte Piai.



Figure 5E.2. Monte Piaia by day (previous page) and enshrouded in mist. Photographs by G Arnosti

Background information

Local archaeologists from the GAC found a few scattered objects in an unclear association with each other and on different points on the hill top (Arnosti 1996b: 69): fragments of local Iron Age pottery (5th BC), one whole Certosa fibula and 5 Certosa fibula rings (fig. 5E.6) dating to the 5th BC on the South-West sector of the hill top and a few Late Roman arrow heads.

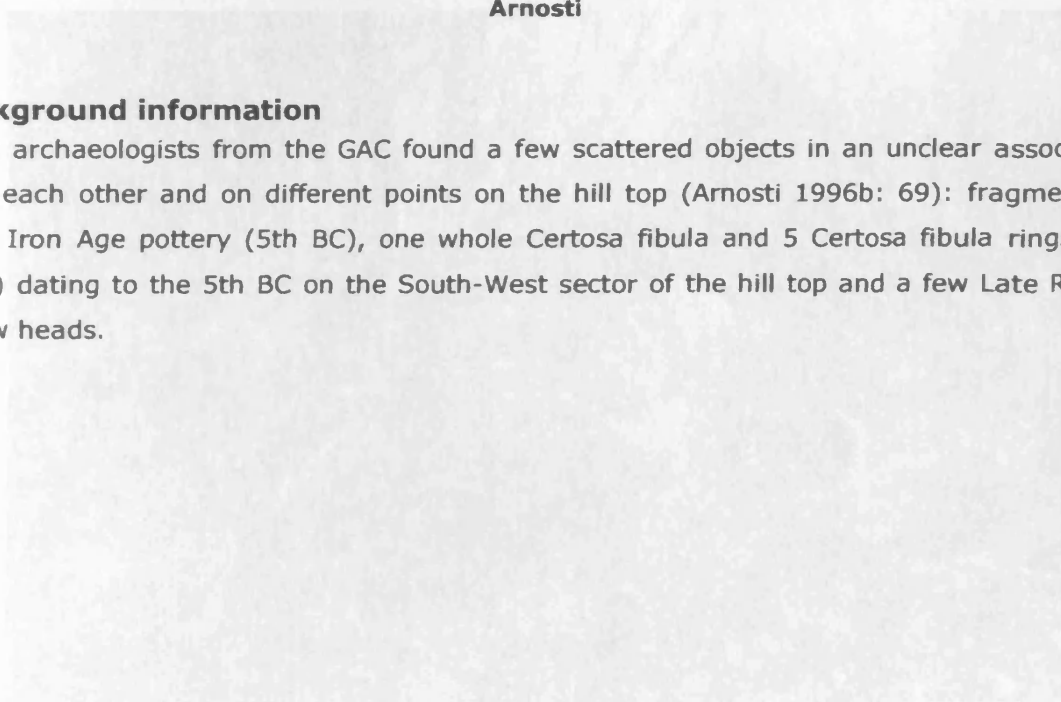


Figure 5E.4. The rocky hilltop



Figure 5E.3. The top of Monte Piai



Figure 5E.4. The rocky hilltop



Figure 5E.5. Scattered boulders on the top. Photographs by author

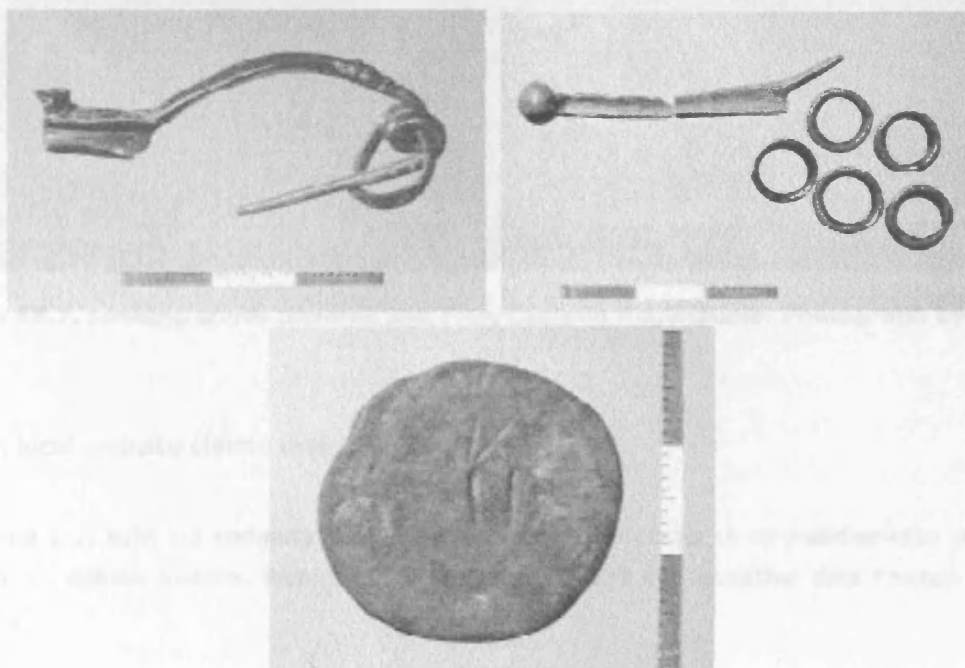


Figure 5E.6. Finds from Monte Piai- fibula and fibula rings (top) and a sors (bottom) courtesy of the GAC

This location was soon labelled as "archaeologically ambiguous": although it had been previously interpreted as a hill top settlement (Arnosti 1996b: 70), its morphological connotation, irregular top and steep slopes makes it unlikely as a long-term or even medium-term place of dwelling, especially due to the very scarce quantity of archaeological material pertaining to contemporary settlement contexts and to the availability of much more suitable locations all around the hill that we know were inhabited, such as Ceneda, Introvigne, Tarzo and the Colle Umberto- Castello Roganzuolo plateau (see fig. 5E.7).



Figure 5E.7. Looking south towards San Fior/Castello Roganzuolo. Photograph by author

A local website claims that Monte Piai is

"Alta collina (...) sulla cui sommità sono state riconosciute le tracce di un insediamento preromano, difeso da un doppio fossato, forse più con funzioni di culto che abitative data l'esigua superficie disponibile"

[A tall hill (...) on top of which archaeologists identified traces of a pre-Roman settlement, defended by a double ditch, perhaps meant as a ritual defence rather than for habitation purposes, given the narrow available surface on the top and slopes]

(<http://www.tragol.it/liberalabici/sub/itinerari/itinerario5-6.htm>, my translation).

Arnosti (Arnosti 1996b: 70) suggested that the "three ditches" on the top that could indicate separate activity areas.

Fieldwork

I decided to conduct fieldwork on this hill as a) it is the most prominent in its surrounding landscape, less picturesque than Mt Altare but taller and more pointed, b) it had the requisites to become a high-visibility cult location, but it did not, and c) it was exploited in occasional, sporadic episodes of "object deposition" through the centuries.

Not strictly speaking an archaeologically "empty" location, but an ambiguous one, it's the perfect place to compare my findings on other hilltop locales yielding evidence of cult in the local area.

The hill is very prominent and its shape is easily recognisable in the skyline and from nearby hilltops. I navigated the local landscape on foot from Monte Altare whenever possible, cutting through fields and unmetalled (white) roads, and approached it by car from the centre of Vittorio Veneto.

The only negotiable way uphill is a steep climb from the east slope (the Le Perdonanze side): it takes about 40 minutes. The path leading uphill is very slight and not visible at times, and it seems to end mid- slope in the east sector.

It turned out that the hilltop seemed indeed too narrow and irregular for settlement purposes, so I set out to investigate how the site might have been used and by whom. What community would have used this site? Where did they live, if they did not inhabit this prominent location? The hill is located 600 to 700 metres S-SW of the settlement of Ceneda, whose inhabitants could have used the locale occasionally, to perform specific rites or to give gifts to the local gods when required. The local "special" element could have been given by the spring of the torrent Monticano, born out of the rocky belly of the hill. The scant archaeological literature (Arnosti 1996b: 69-70) does not mention the spring as part of the local morphology, but I believe the presence of a spring could have been significant in the meaning of place. Springs are a frequent leitmotif of Venetic cult (Pascucci 1990: 26-27, 229 ff.; Capuis 1993), if not of Italic cult altogether (Mastrocinque 1994a; Edlund 1987). A river source is a significant landscape element that could explain why this hill, unlike others surrounding it, was selected for the deposition of special objects through the centuries.

In many cultures past and present springs are an archetypal symbol, and can be perceived as being of great antiquity (Tuan 1977: 125).

The place is unlikely to have substantially changed since the Iron Age. It is a beautiful and secluded hilltop. The trees convey a sense of "closeness" and "intimacy" all around.

We encounter a barrier of standing stones when we approach the top from the South side. There is a real sense of enclosedness on the hilltop, especially in the central sectors, where there are dips and hollows. Fantastic-shaped giant rocks convey a sense of awe of nature and possibly a supernatural element to the spot (figs. 5E.3-5).

In terms of visibility, the prominent location offers great views over the neighbouring terrain. Despite tree cover the surrounding hills are visible: Monte Altare (fig. 5E.8), S. Rocco, Col Cavalier, Col del Notol and Col di Stella (a part of Monte Piaia according to Giovanni Tomasi pers.comm.). The hill is visible from Monte Altare.



Figure 5E.8. All the colours of autumn: a view of Monte Altare from Monte Piaia. Photograph by author

The scarcity of archaeological traces on Mt Piai allows me to make but a few tentative inferences as to the significance in terms of use, perception and positioning of this hill. I will suggest, on the basis of morphological and hydrographical observations in the field, that the hill is too steep to provide a long term settlement site that would be accessed on a daily basis, especially given the abundance of more suitable, lower hills in the area; moreover, the hill top would have been too narrow and irregular to house a substantial community, and it could not have been used as grazing ground due to the steepness of the slopes and the narrow space on top.

Finally, the presence of the spring might afford an element of *specialness* to the hill, which could have been perceived as a liminal place in virtue of its being a tall, pointed hill dominating the local skyline, highly visible from nearby Monte Altare, and the water bubbling out of its belly.

Material culture

The recovery of personal ornaments and pottery could indicate an occasional use for special purposes, or one-off acts of dedication.



One of the Montebelluna discs



The Iron Age burial place of Via Cima Mandria is slightly lower down slope than Via Scalette, but feels loftier, more exposed and higher up: an intentional choice of positioning?

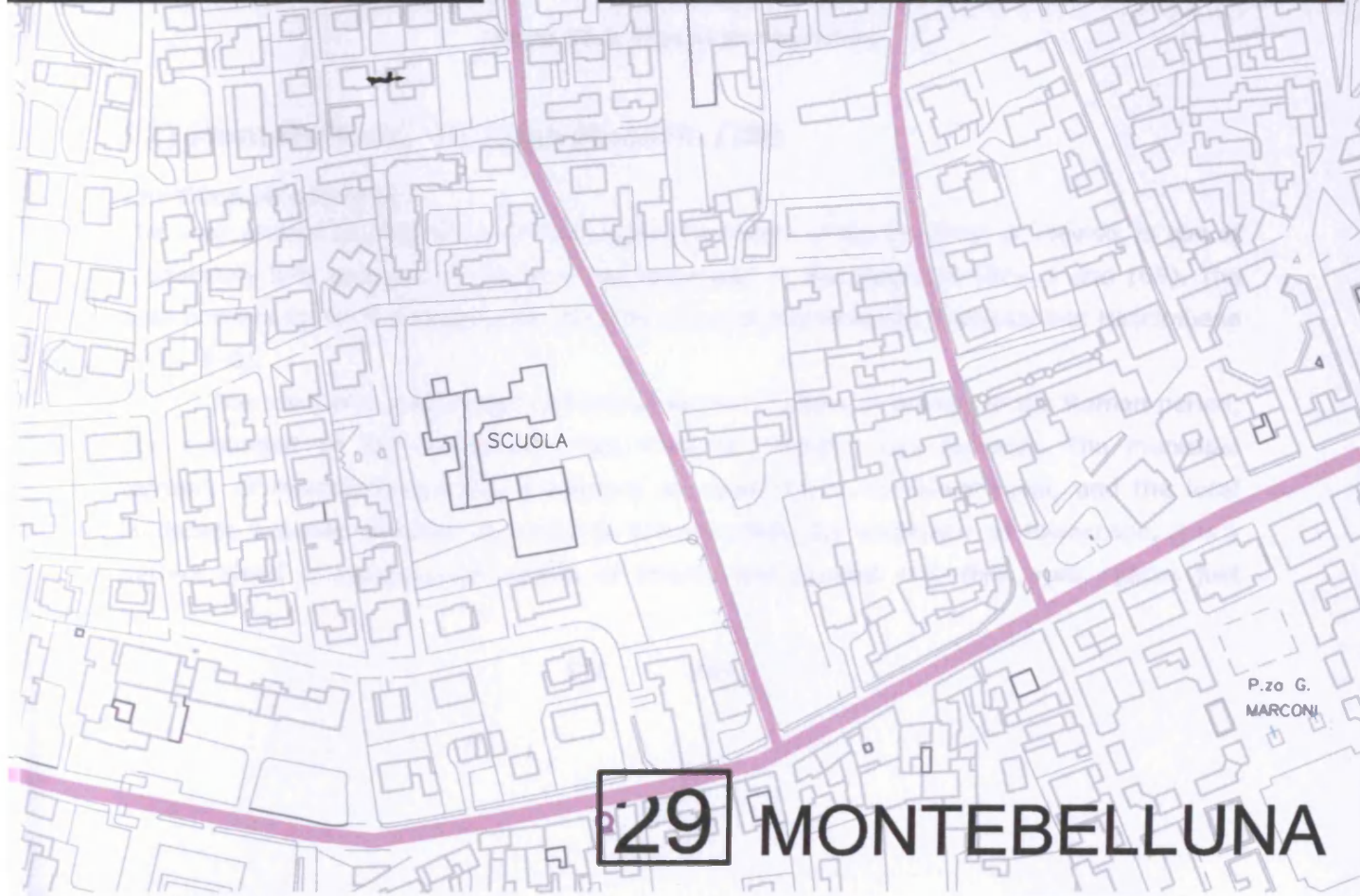
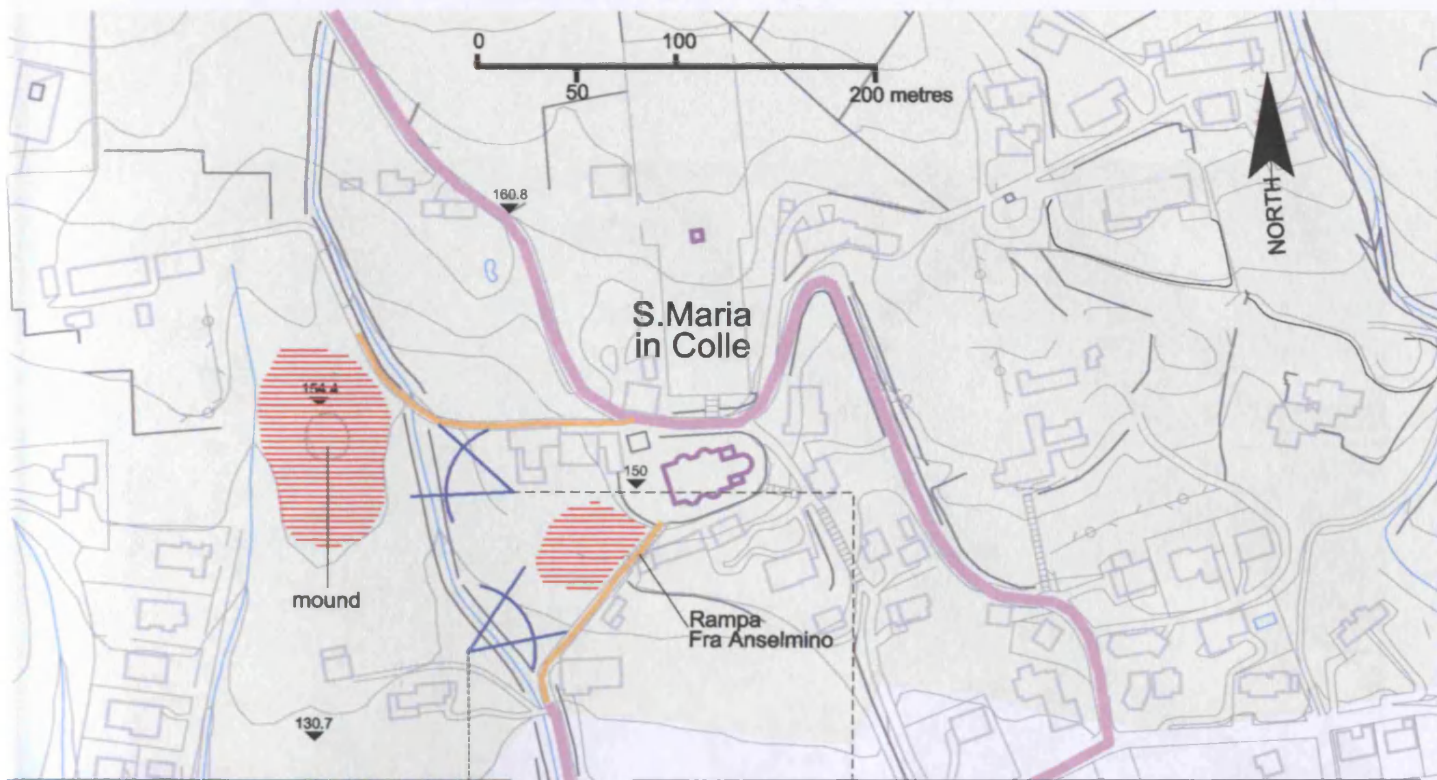




Figure 5E.9. Plan of Montebelluna

E2) Montebelluna, Via Cima Mandria (29)

Landscape context

The area around Montebelluna, in the upper NW sector of the province of Treviso, is one of moderately hilly landscapes typical of the lower part of the piedmont (figs. 1 and 165). The area borders to the Northwest with the hilly group of the Montello (Manessi and Nascimbene 2003: 5-6).

The town of Montebelluna consists of sparse clusters of houses in the Roman period, and expanded on the surrounding hills from the Middle Ages onwards. The municipal territory of Montebelluna today comprises an upper town and lower town, and the local landscape experience varies according to the elevation, the landscape, or townscape; it is a perfect blend of architectural layouts of streets and squares with free, open spaces just

around the corner in the guise of meadows and little wooded areas. The scenery is a pleasant one of sloping fields and terraced areas interrupted by flights of steps leading up and down from different locations, i.e. from the main church to the cemetery.



Figure 5E.10. Via Cima Mandria, Posmon. Photograph by author

Background information

The archaeology of Iron Age Montebelluna consists of a scatter of votive discs (the so called Montebelluna discs) of uncertain provenance (fig. 5E.11) and a number of burial sites scattered along the south and north of the urban territory, both down and uphill.



Figure 5E.11. One of the Montebelluna discs. From Malnati and Gamba 2003

There are three main archaeological areas pertaining to the Iron Age: Santa Maria in Colle, findspot of grave goods and 3 bronzetti in the 19th century, Posmon Rive and Posmon Via Cima Mandria. All three cemetery areas comprise graves dating to the Iron Age (from roughly the 8th century BC to the Romanisation period) and the Roman period (Manessi and Nascimbene 2003: 17 ff.).

Despite the wealth of burial data, dating from the early Iron Age down to the Roman period, and the presence of a Roman settlement nucleus (ibid: 19 ff.) in the church area, and an alleged potters' quarter in Posmon Via Rive, archaeologists have so far failed to detect traces of an Iron Age settlement.

However, 19th century antiquarians recovered three bronzetti, one of which is probably Roman age, and with the other two of the Upper Po valley type (like those from Lagoa, see fig. 5.12 above) in the vicinity of the burial area of Santa Maria in Colle (Fra Assesino) (Manessi and Nascimbene 2003: 17 ff.).

The cemetery at Posmon was excavated in the years 1997-2002 and its graves, all of which contain cremated remains of individuals of both genders in individual graves, span from the 8th century BC to the 1st century AD, the Romanisation period (ibid.).

Fieldwork

I decided to carry out a landscape assessment of the various burial places of Iron Age Montebelluna. Two of them, the locales of Via Scaletta and Rampa Fra Assesino (figs. 5E.12-13), are situated in the upper part of the town surrounding the Posmon parish church



Figure 5E.12. Via Scalette, Montebelluna

As mentioned above, Montebelluna is most famous for the votive bronze discs depicting what is interpreted as a female deity or goddess of nature, surrounded by wild and domesticated animals and plants and holding a key, the provenance of which is sadly unknown: the discs have only been interpreted on the basis of stylistic criteria (Pascucci 1990: 70; Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992: 46-47; Capuis 1998: 112).

However, 19th century antiquarians recovered three bronzetti, one of which of probable Roman age, and with the other two of Mid- Upper Piave valley type (like those from Lagole, see fig. 4.18 above) in the vicinity of the burial area of Santa Maria in Colle (Frà Anselmino) (Manessi and Nascimbene 2003: 17 ff.).

The cemetery of Posmon was excavated in the years 1997-2002 and its graves, all of which contain cremated remains of individuals of both genders in individual graves, span from the 8th century BC to the 1st century AD, the Romanisation period (ibid.).

Fieldwork

I decided to carry out a landscape assessment of the various burial places of Iron Age Montebelluna. Two of them, the locales of Via Scalette and Rampa Frà Anselmino (figs. 5E.12-13), are situated in the upper part of the town surrounding the Posmon parish church

and compose the so-called Santa Maria in Colle complex where the 19th century finds originated (among which the 3 aforementioned bronzetti), whereas the one in the locality of Posmon, more recently excavated, is in the SW part of the town, on Via Cima Mandria.



Figure 5E.13. Rampa Frà Anselmino. Photographs by author

Material culture

The recovery of the bronzetti from the Santa Maria in Colle gives evidence about a spatial relationship of proximity between cult and funerary ritual that so far is only found in Este Portogruaro (2) in West Adriatic. These figures, if indeed they referred to a more substantial kind of object, could indicate a "border" cult place perhaps used to protect the actual boundary between the realm of the dead and the living (Pizzardi 2003: 14-15).

What I find intriguing about this case is that both Portogruaro and Montebelluna-Santa Maria in Colle are not prominent areas, and could not have stood out in the surrounding landscape had it not been for a landscape feature such as the river Adige in Este (2) and a vast cemetery area in Montebelluna.



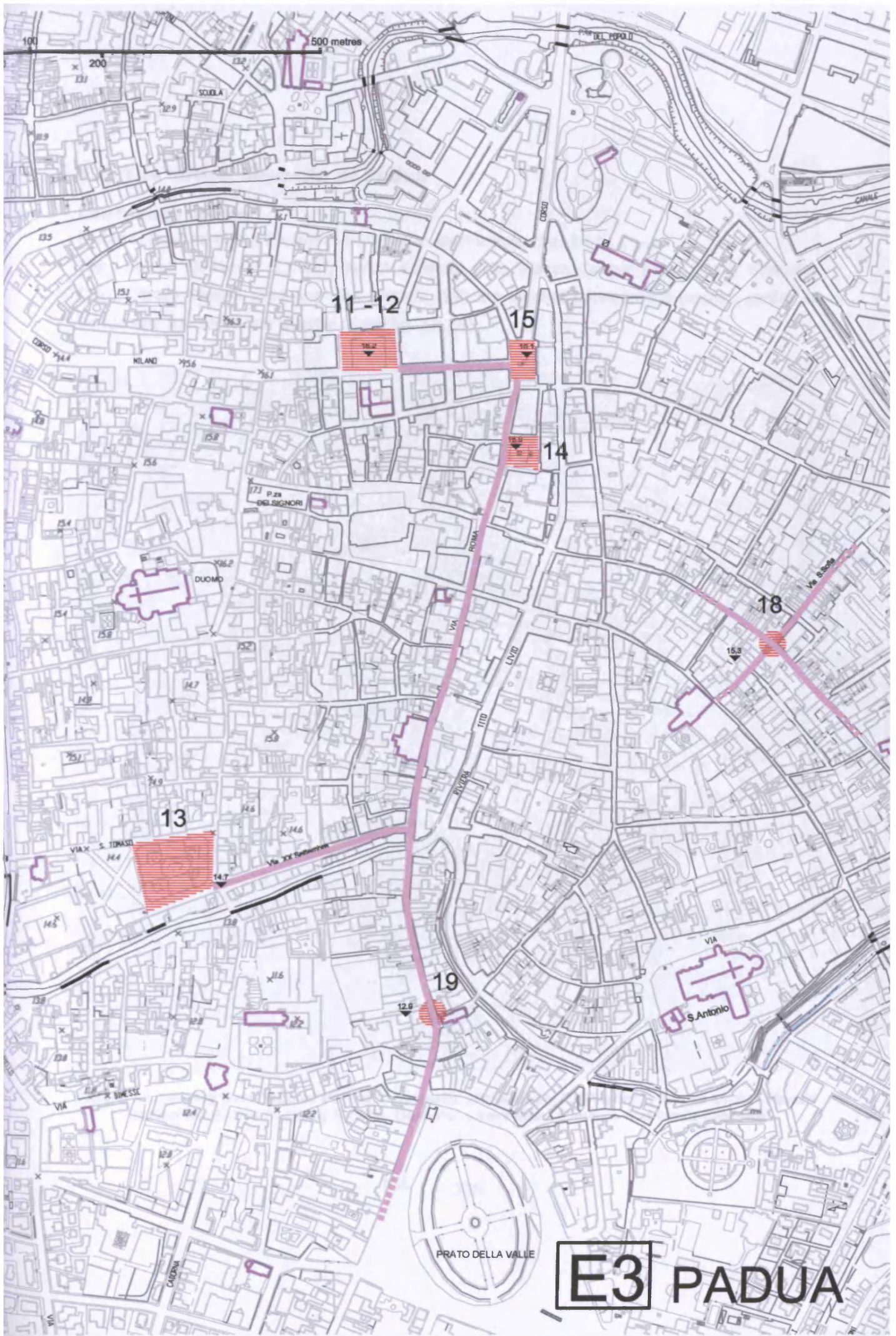
Via Cima Mandria, SW Montebelluna

This location (see figs. 5E.10 and above) is positioned mid-slope on a hill. The interesting sensory impression one has on Via Cima Mandria is that it feels loftier, more exposed and higher up than the other two burial nuclei uphill, Via Scalette and Rampa Frà Anselmino.

Material culture

The recovery of the bronzetti from the Santa Maria in Colle area could represent a spatial relationship of proximity between cult and funerary ritual that to date is only found in Este Morlungo (2) in Iron Age Veneto. These figurines, if indeed they belonged to a more substantial hoard of objects, could indicate a "liminal" cult place positioned so as to protect the actual boundary between the realm of the dead and the living (Manessi 2003: 18-19).

What I find intriguing about this idea is that both Morlungo and Montebelluna- Santa Maria in Colle are not prominent areas, and would not have stood out in the surrounding topography had it not been for a landscape feature such as the river Adige in Este (2) and a vast cemetery area in Montebelluna.



E3 PADUA

E3) The votive deposits of Padua

Landscape context

Padua is located in the Po plain, as we have seen before (fig. 5A.1)

The sites of Ex-Pilsen (11-12), Piazza Castello (13), Piazza Cavour (14), Piazza Garibaldi (15), Pozzo Dipinto (18) and San Daniele (19) are located between the modern centre of Padua and its Northwest quarters (see fig. 5E.14).

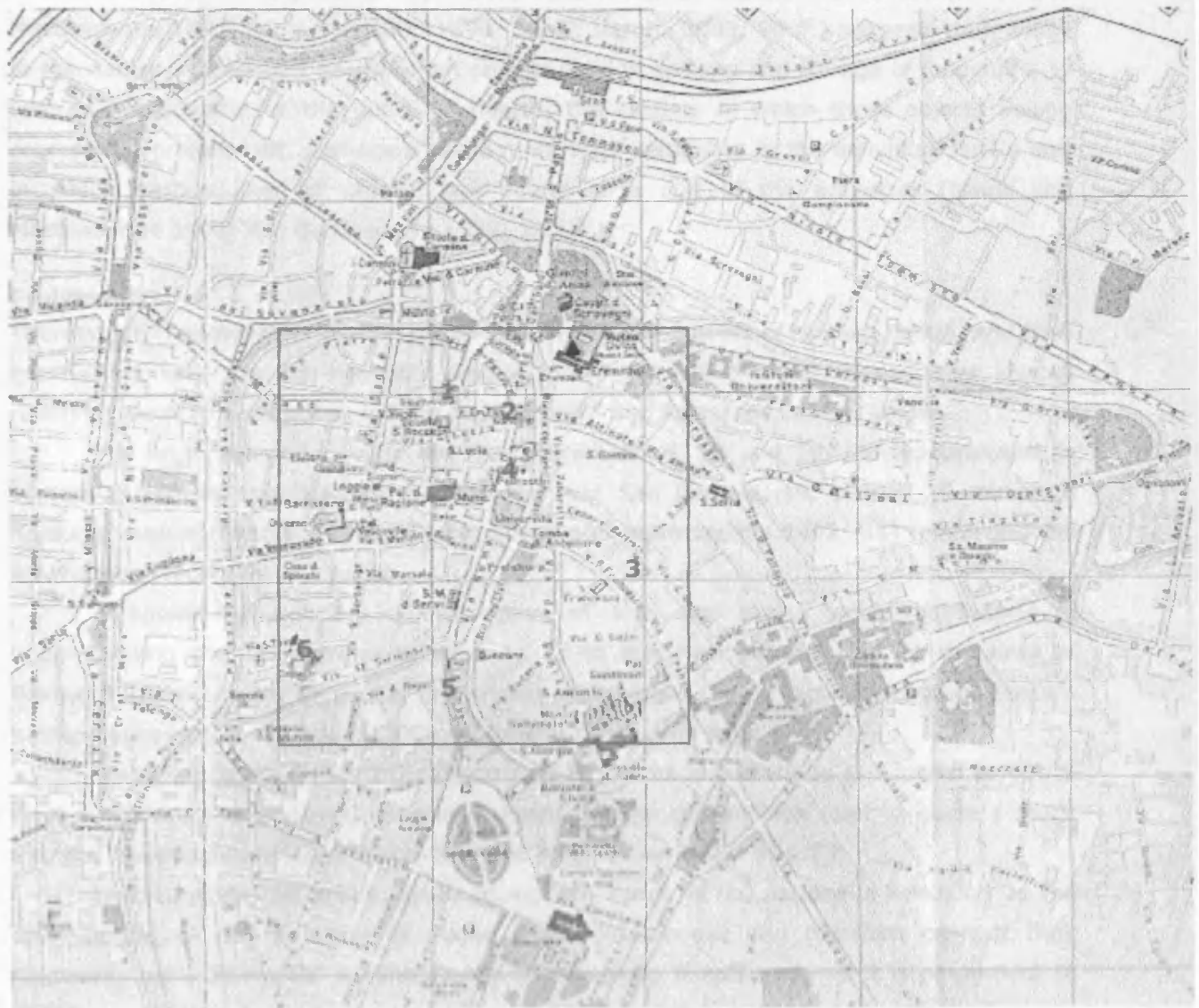


Figure 5E.14 . My field map of Padua's domestic shrines. 1= Ex Pilsen; 2= Santa Lucia- Piazza Garibaldi; 3= Via Battisti; 5= San Daniele; 4= Piazza Cavour; 6= Piazza Castello

Background information

Apart from San Daniele and Pozzo Dipinto, the other sites (11, 12, 13, 14, 15) were classified and interpreted as "domestic" on the basis of two criteria: their occurrence within the remains of domestic units (huts) and the dedication of specifically domestic objects, in stark contrast with the mostly symbolic nature of offerings at other sacred spots in the region (Pascucci 1990: 47-48, 52 *ff.*; Gamba 2003: 90-92).

The current interpretation by Maioli, Mastrocinque, Pascucci and Gamba (Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992: 42 *ff.*; Pascucci 1990: 52 *ff.*; Gamba 2003: 90 *ff.*) suggests that, owing to the nature and context of utilitarian objects used in cooking and storage of foodstuffs, as well as implements for the domestic hearth, the clusters in which these objects belong represent a private cult, perhaps a foundation ritual pertaining to the individual family unit in which each cluster of objects was found or a cult of the ancestors (Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992: 43; Gambacurta 1999: 180 *ff.*).

Fieldwork

The map (E3) shows their spatial distribution within the bounds of modern Padua, and their relationship with the non-domestic sites (18 and 19). All of these locales were located relatively close to each other, but the form of "cult" and landscape context varied.

The sites associated with the river Bacchiglione, 18 and 19, yielded bronzetti in varying quantities (photographs unavailable) and San Daniele, 19, yielded 19 miniature drinking vessels (Pascucci 1990: 52-54; Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992: 41) reinforcing the link between local cult and water.

A palaeo-hydrographic reconstruction of Iron Age Padua would be helpful in understanding the relationship of sites 11-15 to the river as well, but at the time of fieldwork I was unable to access any useful publications. For a reconstruction of Padua's palaeo-hydrography see Pearce 2006, especially figure 3 on page 474.

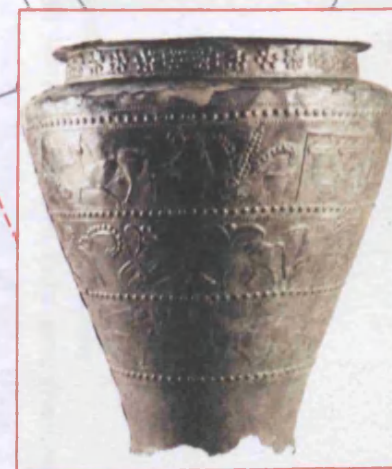
The living space in settlement contexts is just as important as the spatial layout of rural or en route landscapes, especially when remains of dwellings exist to guide a study into the "dwelling experience" (Hamilton and Whitehouse 2006: 164 *ff.*).

Unfortunately the urban layout of modern Padua is not as ideal a condition as the open spaces of the Tavoliere of Puglia where Whitehouse and Hamilton conduct their fieldwork, but I attempted a contextualization exercise nonetheless, as it is paramount to my approach to apply the same description and interpretation criteria to all sites.

The urban landscape of Padua is a mixture of Medieval and Renaissance palazzos and churches, 18th century town houses, 19th century public buildings and modern concrete constructions, mostly hosting administrative offices and banks. The city centre is also the historic centre, where most tourist attractions, museums, churches and galleries are located, as well as the most ancient nucleus of the University of Padua.

Having gathered the positioning of the sites in Padua from the literature I walk from one locale to another, to verify the actual distance between these sacred places and to establish their spatial relationship, and that to other sacred spots within the Padua perimeter. The locales are clustered relatively close to each other (on average 50 metres apart), despite the obvious barriers and visibility impediments generated by modern buildings. It is interesting to note however how dwellings that yielded "special" objects tend to cluster on the same side of the ancient Padua, whereas other nuclei, not yielding such evidence of cult, are located in other parts of the settlement, farther from the river stips of San Daniele (19) and Pozzo Dipinto (18) and, presumably, the course of the Bacchiglione.

The significance of this distribution could reside in the proximity to water, and local family groups who shared ancestral cult practices living near each other. Perhaps the ancestors "worshipped" or appeased with gifts in the individual family unit were the same. Excavations failed to unearth any human remains below the hut floors that could indicate the actual burial of family members on the spot of subsequent domestic or ancestral rites.



E4) Este Benvenuti (8)

Landscape context and background information

This cemetery, one of the most famous sites in Este and the one yielding the well-known Benvenuti situla is located on a hillock North-east of Este (Figs. 171 and 172). The location is reached on foot from the historic quarter behind the museum, up a moderately steep path in the park of a former Venetian villa, Villa Cornaro Benvenuti. The site of the cemetery is located underneath and in front of a villa outbuilding (fig. 5E.16), now in ruins. At present it is not visible, as the burials had been excavated at the end of the 19th century. The location appears as an overgrown space in front of the building, immersed in vegetation.



Figure 5E.15. Looking back down the path leading to Villa Benvenuti



Figure 5E.16. Villa Cornaro Benvenuti. Photographs by author

Fieldwork

This cemetery was part of a cluster of burial nuclei in the NW of Este, the so called Muletti/Alfonsi/Ricovero group (Capuis and Chieco Bianchi 2006: 44 *ff.*). It was located along a belt of significant sites along the foot of the Colle del Principe, culminating in the Meggiaro plain to the east (fig. 5E.17).

Figure 5E.17. Tentative outline of the processional way going from Casa di Biondini (Via S. Stefano- in blue) to Via Meggiaro via Benvenuti (A)

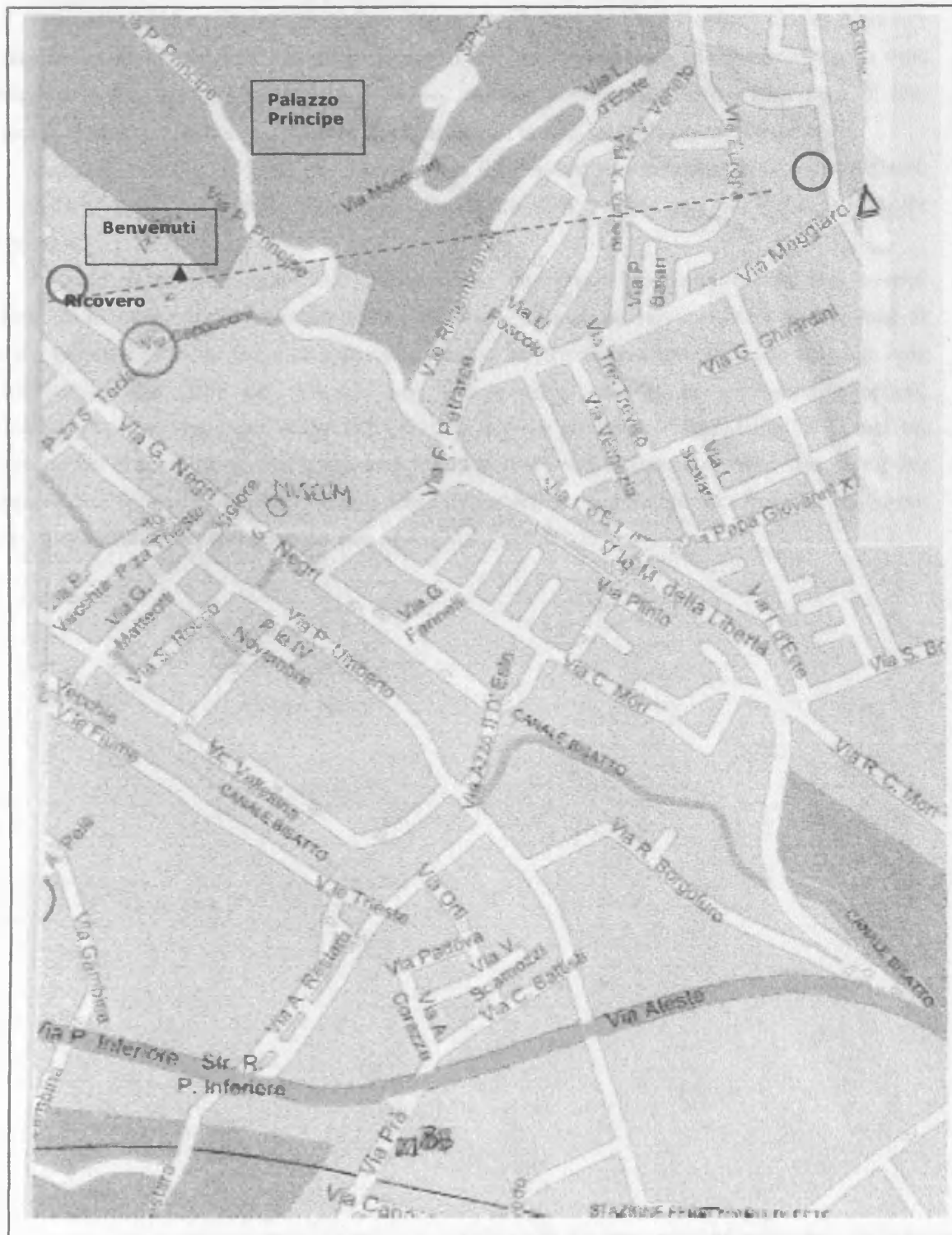


Figure 5E.17. Tentative outline of the processional way going from Casa di Ricovero (Via S. Stefano- in blue) to Via Megliaro via Benvenuti (8)

The sides of the path climbing the side of the hillock, whose western slopes blend in with the taller hill known as Colle del Principe to the North-West, are thickly wooded, so that visibility over the main Este area is impeded. As the photographs show (fig. 5E.15), the location is mid-slope, but still elevated in comparison to the underlying settlement site.

In terms of visibility, the site would have dominated a clear view over the West and North parts of Este and would have been intervisible with the top and upper slope of Colle del Principe.

A processual way could have skirted the cemetery area and linked two sacred locations that were roughly contemporary (6 and 7): it could have started at the foot of Colle de Principe (7) and Casa di Ricovero, passed by the Benvenuti area (8) and followed the hillfoot of the Colle del Principe and the marshy plain in an eastward direction, culminating in the Meggiaro plain (6). This is only a tentative reconstruction based on archaeological traces along the way, and starting from the assumption that the cemetery clusters at the foot of Colle del Principe were perceived as significant locations by the same people who worshipped the gods on top of the very same hill.

43 MONTE DOLADA Staol di Curago

0 100 metres

50

NORTH



955.1

Case Deneve

Roman cemetery

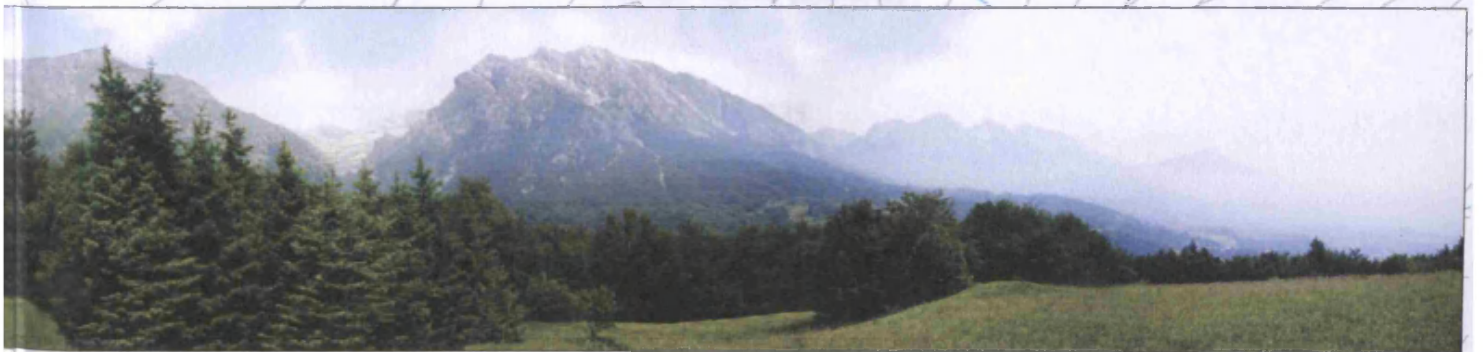
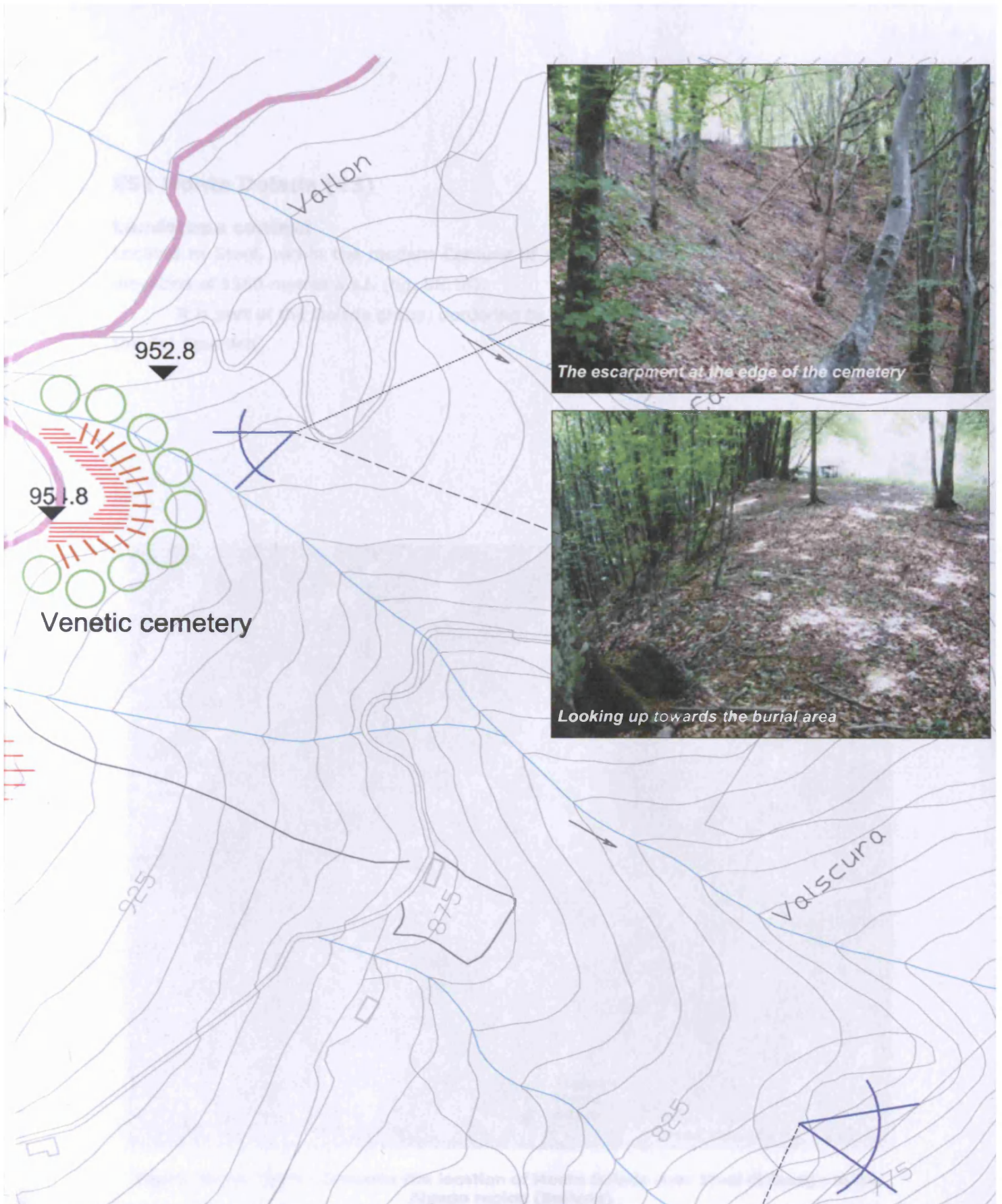
93

STAOL DI CURAGO

Pieve d'Alpago Km. 3.5

937





E5) Monte Dolada (43)

Landscape context

Located in Staol, within the modern Comune of Pieve d'Alpago, this mountain reaches an elevation of 1550 metres a.s.l. (fig. 5E.18).

It is part of the Dolada group, bordering to the N with the Col Mat and to the SW with the Col Spuntich.

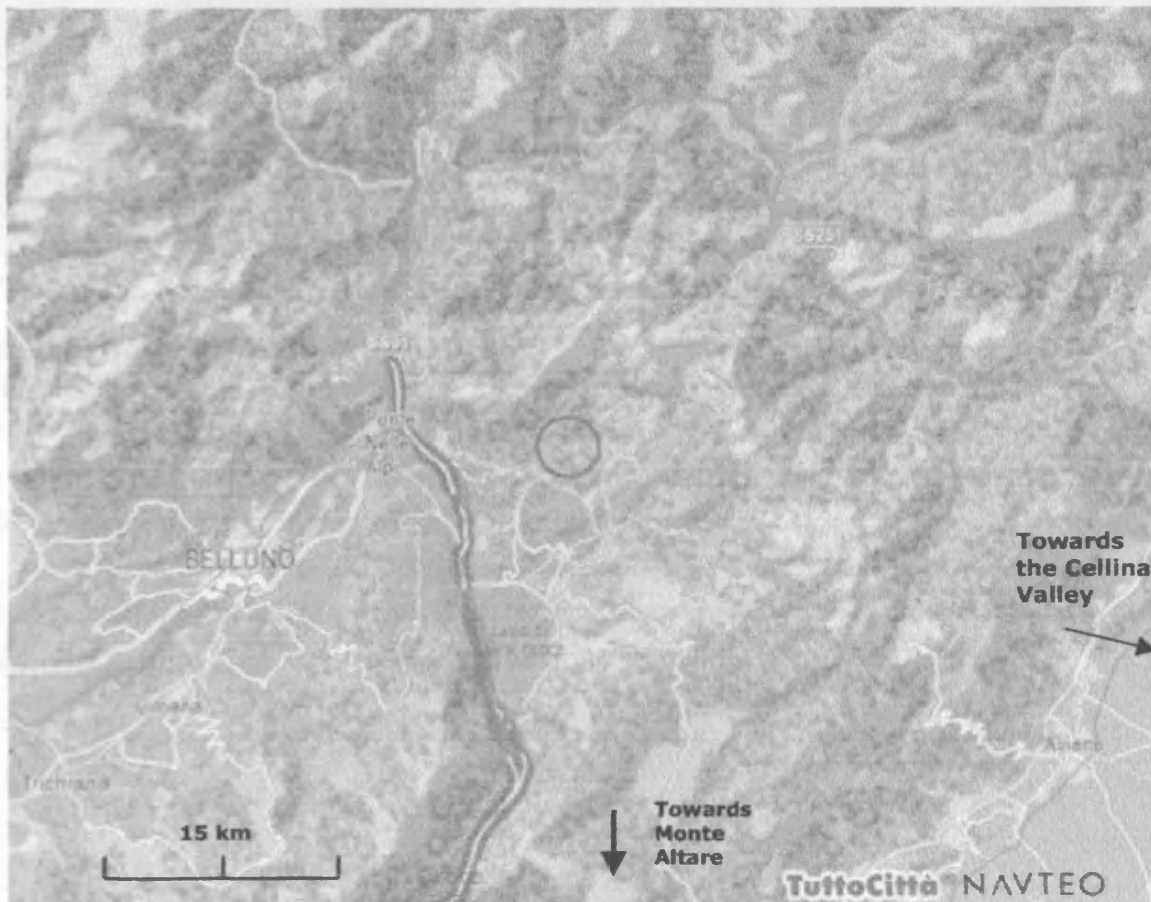


Figure 5E.18. The circle marks the location of Monte Dolada near Staol di Curago in the Alpago region (Belluno)



Figure 5E.19. Monte Dolada. All photographs by author

Background information

The site, located at 927 metres, was excavated in the late 1990s.

700 m south of this site and at roughly the same altitude, a Roman cemetery dating from the 1st to the 4th centuries AD was also excavated (Eugenio Padovan at <http://www.archeoagordo.it/12/alpago.htm> and pers.comm.).

On Pian de la Gnella/dell'Agnella, burials have been dated to the 6th century BC thanks to the recovery of a remarkable bronze situla (www.archeoagordo.it/12/alpago.htm), of which I did not manage to obtain either a photograph or a drawing.



Figure 5E.20. Monte Dolada. Looking towards the Roman cemetery from the path

Fieldwork

The lower slopes of Mt Dolada were extensively reforested in modern times, following centuries of use of the area as pasture for cattle and sheep.

I had very little to go on in my interpretation of this high altitude burial place, whose remote location is made all the more fascinating by the recovery of wealthy burials like the one yielding the situla.

Figure 5E.20 shows the location of the Roman cemetery on the edge of the dip and in the surrounding area. The lower slopes of the mountain are covered by a dense forest of conifers, as if the area were for the most part "recovered" in relation to the surrounding woodland topography. Almost on a ledge, there is a distinct performance structure in this location, in the gravel just on the edge of the clear environment. The structure on the edge of the dip makes one feel a certain way, as if a person were about to step.

Furthermore, considering the quality of certain graves in this group, it cannot be excluded that this is a confirmation of the fact that the location of this burial place.



Figure 5E.21. The location of the graves on Pian dell'Agnella

Upon a first inspection, the Dolada cemetery is located in a largely unaltered woodland locale (fig. 5E.21). The place consists of a clearing on top of a ridge overlooking a dip ("vallone"), a drop some 30-40 metres down (figs. 5E.21-23).

Although the location of the graves blends in with the surrounding landscape of pine trees, the positioning of the burials just on the edge of the dip and in the surrounding area (figs. 5E.22, 5E.23) gives the location a feeling of prominence, as if the space used for the burials was "elevated" in relation to the surrounding woodland topography... almost on a ledge. There is a distinct performance element to this location, in the graves just on the edge of the deep escarpment. The positioning on the edge of the dip makes one feel exposed but in a positive sense, almost on display.

Furthermore, considering the wealth of certain graves in this group, it cannot be excluded that status reaffirmation could be a factor for the positioning of this burial place.



Figure 5E.22. The sloping layout of the edge of the cemetery

Figure 5E.24. The cemetery below the burial area



Figure 5E.23. Looking down from the ledge on which graves are located



Figure 5E.24. The escarpment below the burial area

The cemetery location is not visible from the neighbouring slopes/clearings, and not intervisible with the Roman burial area. Visibility is impeded/hindered by tree cover all round and a summer heat-haze covering the summits of nearby mountains, hiding even the very top of the Dolada and the imposing Mt Teverone to the north.

ID	Name	Type	Milieu	Features	Link with settlements	Chronology	Cult
1	Lova Campagnalupia	Cult	Lagoon	River, lagoon	No	3 rd BC	Water, liminal?
2	Este Morlungo	Cult	Plain	River	Suburban	4 th -3 rd BC?	Liminal, fertility
3	Este Baratella	Cult	Plain	River, settlement	Suburban	7 th BC-Roman	Writing, liminal, fertility
4	Este Canevedo	Settlement			N/A	6 th - 5 th BC	NA
5	Este Casale	Cult	Plain	River?	Suburban	7 th BC? - Roman	Healing?
6	Este Meggiaro	Cult	Plain	Marshy	Suburban	6 th BC	Status, fertility
7	Este Caldevigo	Cult	Plain	Hilltop	Suburban	5 th BC	Status
8	Este Benvenuti	Cemetery	Plain	Hilltop	Suburban	6 th -4 th BC	NA
9	Abano Terme	Deposit	Plain	River	No	4 th - 3 rd BC	Water, drinking
10	Montegrotto Terme	Shrine	Plain	Lake, Springs	No	8 th BC- AD	Water, drinking, healing
11	Ex-Pilsen A	Deposit?	Settlement	Domestic unit	Urban	5 th - 4 th BC	Domestic?
12	Ex-Pilsen B	Deposit?	Settlement	Domestic	Urban	5 th - 4 th BC	Domestic?
13	Piazza Castello	Deposit?	Settlement	Domestic	Urban	6 th - 5 th BC	Domestic?
14	Piazza Cavour	Deposit?	Settlement	Domestic	Urban	DK	DK
15	Piazza Garibaldi	Deposit?	Settlement	Domestic?	Urban	6 th BC?	DK
16	Via Rialto	Deposit?	Settlement	Domestic?	Urban	5 th - 4 th BC	DK
17	Via Battisti	Deposit?	Settlement	Domestic?	Urban	4 th BC	Domestic?
18	Pozzo Dipinto	Deposit	Suburban	River	Suburban	4 th BC- AD	Water, status?
19	S. Daniele	Deposit	Suburban	River	Suburban	5 th - 4 th BC	Water, status?
20	Altichiero	Deposit	River	River	No	6 th BC- AD	Water, status
21	Mortise	Deposit	Plain	Rural	Suburban	5 th - 4 th BC	Status
22	Mandriola	Deposit	Plain	Rural	No	5 th - 4 th BC	Status?
23	Bertipaglia	Deposit	Plain	Rural	No	5 th - 4 th	Status?
24	Camin	Deposit	Plain	Marshy, woodland	No	4 th - 3 rd BC	Status?
25	Musile	Deposit	Plain, lagoon	River?	No	6 th BC?	Lady of the animals
26	Altino La Fornace	Shrine	Lagoon	Canals	Suburban	11 th /10 th BC?- Late Antique	Emporic, water, liminality, status?
27	Altino Canevere	Deposit	Lagoon	River Zero	Suburban	5 th BC?	Water, liminality?
28	Asolo	Deposit	Piedmont	DK	Suburban	DK	DK, Status?
29	Montebelluna Cima Mandria	Cemetery	Piedmont	Prominent place	Suburban	8 th BC- 1 st BC	NA
30	Fossalta di Portogruaro	Deposit	Lagoon, plain	DK	N/A	5 th BC	DK
31	Vicenza Piazzetta S. Giacomo	Deposit	Settlement	River	Urban	5 th BC	Water
32	Magrè	Deposit	Piedmont	Hill	No	5 th - 2 nd BC	Liminal?, oracle

33	Santorso	Deposit	Piedmont	Hill	No	3 rd - 2 nd BC?	Liminal?, oracle
34	Cave of Bocca Lorenza	Deposit?	Piedmont	Cave, High place	?	5 th BC- AD	Liminal, oracle?
35	Trissino	Deposit	Piedmont	Hill	No	3 rd BC	Liminal?, oracle
36	Castello Roganzuolo	Deposit	Piedmont	Hill	No	5 th - 4 th BC	Agricultural, fertility, status?
37	Presette	Deposit	Piedmont	Plain, rural	No	5 th BC	Agricultural?
38	Montereale Valcellina	Deposit	Plain	River	No	11th- 7 th BC?	Status, water?
39	Scomigo	Deposit	Piedmont	Hill	No	6 th - 5 th BC	DK
40	Mt Altare	Shrine	Piedmont	Hill, Springs	Suburban	6 th BC- AD	Liminality, high place, fertility, oracle?
41	Mt Piai	DK	Piedmont	Hill	Suburban		DK
42	Villa di Villa	Shrine	Piedmont	High place, caves	No	4 th BC- AD	Fertility, high place, water?
43	Mt Dolada	Cemetery	Mountain	High place	No	6 th BC- AD	NA
44	Vallesella di Domegge	Deposit	Mountain	DK	N/A	DK	Status?
45	Lagole di Calalzo	Shrine	Mountain	Springs	No	5 th BC- AD	Water, healing, status, liminality
46	Mt Nenz, Trichiana	Deposit	Mountain	Hilltop	No	7 th BC?	Status, liminality, key?
47	Mt Calvario, Auranzo	Shrine	Mountain	Hill	No	3 rd - 2 nd BC	Water?, community, status?
48	Valle di Cadore	Deposit?	Mountain	N/A	N/A	N/A	Fertility, healing?
50	Mel di Cadore	Settlement	Mountain	Hillcrest	N/A	5 th BC	NA
49	Mel tumuli	Cemetery	Mountain	Plain	Suburban	5 th BC	NA
al Plain	Total Piedmont	Total mountain	Total laagoon				

Table 5.1. Longevity of sites, association with settlements and landscape context

5.2 Conclusions

The table above illustrates the relationship between length of site use and the positioning of sites, landscape context and geographic milieu. It can be observed that there seems to be no positive link between landscape context and site longevity.

In this chapter I have presented the results of my fieldwork and offered a preliminary interpretation of the sites and areas I explored. The individual fieldwork forms are in appendix 2, in the separate volume.

In the next, concluding chapter I will discuss the results and findings of my fieldwork and draw conclusions from this journey through meaningful places and landscapes.

Chapter 6. Revisiting landscapes: discussion and conclusion

"Here the mutedness of sounds matches that of the colours as all the facades fade in nuances of yellowed pallor, washed-out greens, antiquated pinks that sing softly the silent melody of faded hues. Who knows what obsession of candles and incense pursues one through this maze of calm streets."

Georges Rodenbach, *"The Death Throes of Towns"*, p. 145

6.1 Introduction

The preceding chapters have considered in turn a number of aspects of Iron Age culture in the Veneto: a material culture framework (chapter 1), the regional and local landscape context of meaningful locales, place biographies, site positioning, cult typologies, the range and distribution of votive objects and the issue of perception (chapter 4). A distinction and division of these issues and phenomena into separate chapters was artificially imposed, as they all feed into one another, and points of overlap can be identified. This chapter will not only stress the nature of these overlapping points, but also bring the fieldwork results together and interpret the data I have gathered in the process.

In this chapter I will present the outcome of my own topographic and phenomenological assessment of place, argue my interpretation of the positioning and perception of meaningful places in the landscape, the impact they were likely to have on worshippers and on the people inhabiting the land, and I will offer an interpretation of the material culture pertaining to these sites. I will assess my field experiences and add to the existing knowledge of votive deposits (object studies), in order to shape a new reading of these landscapes: I achieved this by considering a long-term chronological framework in which to experience and interpret these places.

In terms of the later prehistoric context of this study, it is my belief that, far from being mutually excluding entities, and existing on completely detached planes of existence, landscape and people interacted through cult practices in Iron Age Veneto and left behind meaningful traces of such interaction, be it tangible (artefacts and buildings) or 'invisible' (place names, place-specific meanings, traditions and rituals). I will attempt to demonstrate this below.

Section 6.2 analyses the regional patterns in cult sites based on the geographical grouping of sites into Po plain, lagoon, piedmont and mountains as seen in the preceding chapter.

Section 6.3 draws preliminary conclusions on the overall patterns from a site context perspective, such as the relationship with settlements, and draws on other distinctions that are not geographical.

Section 6.4 discusses the issues of natural landscape features and argues the significance of landscape settings as reflected in cult objects and rituals, whereas the final sections, 6.6 and 6.7 conclude not only this chapter but also the thesis as a whole.

6.2 Geographical perspectives: the search for local patterns and identities

Following chapter 5, I will briefly review the various geographical sectors I have dealt with, and the sites therein, to draw upon a final comparison of geographically close sites, in order to identify any local patterns, and also because I believe all culturally significant places are best understood in their local, place-specific context, and in association with each other; I will then bring together the findings from these different areas in an overall discussion of the relevance, significance and phenomenological implications of cult and social complexities in the Venetic perception of landscape.

6.2.1 The Po plain

In this section I will present the outcome of my ongoing fieldwork in the Po plain and offer my interpretation of the landscape positioning and material culture pertaining to votive deposits in this area. I will then compare my interpretation with previously studied evidence and theories by other scholars in the field.

Judging only by the existing publications, sites in the Po plain look seemingly similar in terms of material culture and chronology: the truth is that even votive deposits within the bounds of a single settlement site, Este, differ greatly in terms of cult practices and votive dedications. They also differ in terms of long-term place use and significance.

There remained for me to understand how these differences were dictated by different groups within the wider community, but also if and how they were brought about by different cult requirements and place-specific elements.

After visiting Este on four different occasions, I started to fully appreciate the varied morphology of the urban area and the differences in location of three of its main votive deposits, which I argued were part of a pilgrimage route (see chapter 5A above). I found that they all varied in terms of micro-landscape settings: the stipe of Morlungo (2) was on lowland, on the plain and by a river; the stipe of Meggiaro (6) was also on low ground, but in a part marshy context and also near a stretch of the Adige (Balista, Sainati and Salerno 2002: 130 *ff.*); the stipe of Colle del Principe (7) was on high ground, in a prominent

location, positioned along a 'processional' route marked by cemeteries and votive deposits (fig. 5E.17 on page 331).

Two variables are significant players in the case of Este: the proximity to other special places and the nature of votives that were dedicated at each stipe; each can offer insights into the reasons for the positioning of specific sacred sites in the landscape.

In terms of proximity to other special sites, Meggiaro (6) was relatively isolated from other significant locales, and positioned at the east end of a belt or processional way of sacred and mortuary sites that started with Colle del Principe (7) and the Casa di Ricovero cemetery in the west (map A3 on pp. 168-169), as observed during fieldwork and by looking at maps of the city of Este.

The significance behind the positioning of votive deposits could be given by their liminality, i.e. a location topographically or symbolically marking a boundary with something else, with a different dimension or area of the landscape: such is the case of Morlungo (2), the symbolic and actual boundary along the river.

I then set out to assess the different functions and purposes of the cult places of Este: I started by looking at the excavated plan of the Meggiaro (6) cult place in an attempt to identify a spatial 'logic' behind its establishment, layout and cult functions. The separation in areas devoted to display and parades (the paved path), ritual pits and animal sacrifice suggests separate activity areas in a large open air space. I observed that the elaborate, extensive and open-air character of this votive complex could indeed have represented a place of status display and ritual performance, but also possibly a place for displaying and witnessing rites and sacrifices at a larger scale, a place that could accommodate spectators, and permitted participation by non-elite members of society in sacred meals or banquets (in light of the large amounts of animal remains with butchery marks). In short, I think Meggiaro (6) was a place where but a few were allowed to perform the rites, but many more could have a degree of involvement in them. The crowd witnessing the rites up close might have consisted of the whole aristocratic family of the participants, whereas non-elite members of society could have observed the rites from afar, or been aware of their taking place, so that the social structure of contemporary Este could be reaffirmed and maintained. The open air, open landscape character of Meggiaro (6) along with the paved path that survived for more than two centuries and was periodically restored, could have suited ritual parades and the gorier aspects of initiation, such as mutilation. This fits in with Ruta Serafini's interpretation of the path as a processional way or parade ground for cult initiates (cf. Ruta Serafini and Sainati 2002: 216).

My assessment of site positioning suggests that the context of Caldevigo, the Colle del Principe, was different: the very morphology of place, hill slopes and top could have made it unsuitable for a large scale, extensive cult place, but the prominent nature of a hill made it perfectly suitable for a different type of coming of age ritual, one in which women and men took part alike- judging from the portrayal of both sexes on the laminae and bronzetti.



Figure 6.1. Our destination: the top of Colle del Principe.

Figure 6.2: The start of the journey to Colle del Principe

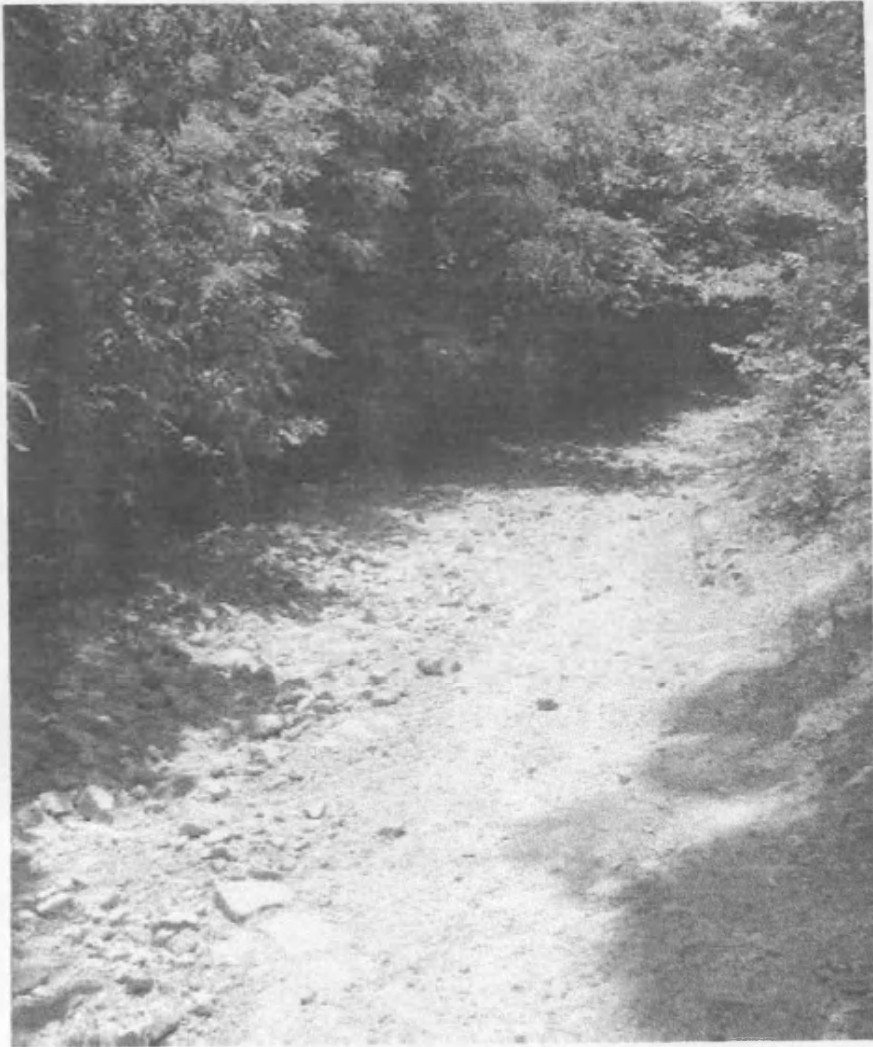


Figure 6.2. The start of the path uphill to Colle del Principe

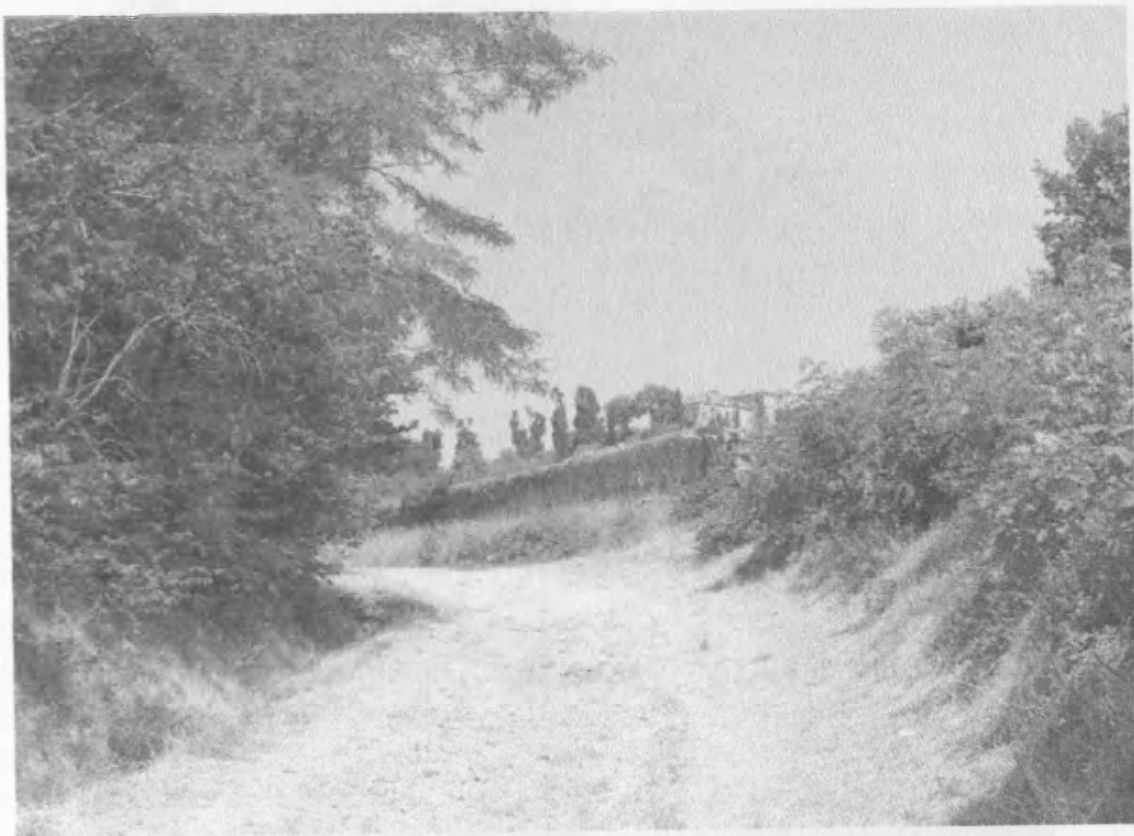


Figure 6.3. The top of Colle del Principe comes into sight

Figure 6.4. Sheep stand in the valley floor. All photographs by author

They were probably not used by a community and there took part in the ritual that developed out of an individual or family unit forced to realize the cults performed here with a personal, intimate connection with the deity, in the form of individual, more elaborate offerings of the particular star person. It is not clear whether the



Figure 6.4. Steep ascent in the summer heat. All photographs by author

They were probably led uphill in a procession and there took part in the rituals that demanded less of an audience or maybe even forbade it; maybe the cults performed here were of a personal, intimate interaction with the deity, in the form of individual, more elaborate effigies of the participants and personal ornaments. It is not clear whether the

many bronze replicas of cross-hatched box-containers (astucci) dedicated at Caldevigo (7) contained fragments of human tissue, like the amulets from Este Meggiaro (6).

Supporting evidence for coming of age rituals at Colle del Principe is found in Pascucci (1990: 75, footnote 23) when she discusses one specific kind of lamina, portraying one of the tell-tale elements of high ranking women in Este, and contextualises it in the realm of social rituals:

"Una delle lamine del deposito Caldevigo, di piccole dimensioni, sembra raffigurare soltanto un cinturone a losanga (Callegari 1938: 224 no.17); questo fatto singolare conferma l'importanza attribuita al cinturone come elemento iconografico significativo (...) ai fini del valore dell'offerta votiva. I cinturoni a losanga, ritrovati in corredi di tombe femminili in Este, si trovavano all'infuori dell'ossuario in posizione di rilievo nell'ambito del corredo e per le loro caratteristiche erano verosimilmente usati soltanto come oggetti da parata, "segno distintivo di rango sociale"

[One small lamina from the votive deposit of Caldevigo seems to portray nothing but a lozenge belt buckle (Callegari 1938: 224 no.17); this unusual fact buttresses the significance of the belt buckle as iconographic symbol (...) tied to the value of votive offerings. The lozenge belt buckles, found as female grave goods in Este, are normally prominently positioned among the mortuary set outside the urn, and they were likely to have been worn [used] as parade ornaments due to their elaborate characteristics: they were a status symbol.]

(Pascucci 1990: 75, footnote 23, my translation).

Emphasis is on rites involving women that may have not required such 'show-off', big-scale ceremonies as their male warrior counterpart predominating at other cult places (Meggiaro, 6).

Considering the overlapping use of both cemetery and sacred place on Colle del Principe (7), situated at very distinct locations on the same hill, I suggest that the hill was a significant landmark in the ancient Este topography, and that the inhabitants established and marked out different areas serving different purposes: the top could have been naturally thought suitable for rites of initiation in which the participants physically and symbolically went "up in the world", whereas the foot of the hill served as a guarding place for the ancestors (Este Casa di Ricovero): this cemetery is incidentally the oldest and the most prestigious burial nucleus in Este together with the neighbouring Benvenuti area, 8 (Capuis 2004: 133; Capuis and Chieco Bianchi: 43-45). Based on topographic and material culture assessments, I will suggest that the positioning of votive deposit and cemetery in this locale could signify the embedded "special-ness" of the Colle del Principe (7) and an awareness of the varied dimensions of ritual on the part of the ancient inhabitants.

The landscape context of Morluno (2) demanded yet another treatment and suggested a different pattern of spatial interaction and would have had a different sensory impact on worshippers: the location on the south bank of the flowing river in itself may have evoked feelings of being on a threshold to another realm, and evokes a sense of movement, the flowing of time and the purifying action of water. This small scale votive deposit, with its proximity to the river and the extensive Capodaglio cemetery beyond may have demanded more humble acts of devotion, but also hindered the survival of dedicated objects, especially if these were deposited on the bank or submerged in water. Its watery context could draw parallels with Altichiero (20) and Este Casale (5), another small scale votive deposit along the Lozzo canal, a branch of the Adige.



Figure 6.5. The flat fields of Morluno. Photograph by author

The locale of Altichiero on the river Brenta (19) strikes me as unique in its chronology, development and in the nature of the dedicated objects (cf. fig. 5B.18 on page 207). Compared to other locations on the Po plain it stands out as independent from Este, not only in its material culture but also in its landscape context: although one can hypothesise the presence of the Atestine Baratella (3) shrine by the ancient course of the Adige, this (Maggiani 2002: 72 ff; Dämmer 2002b) would have consisted of a monumental structure dating to the 3rd century BC and positioned far from the core of the ancient settlement, but at its symbolic centre (Balista and Rinaldi 2002). The situation was very different at Altichiero (19), a landmark in itself, a river, but a symbol of boundaries, not of a specific living community: the geographical entity of the river could have been redolent of

liminal significance and marked out physically and symbolically a special area, and also the start of the 'Padua settlement area'. Altichiero was a cult place that was highly visible and significantly positioned, and where therefore structures would have been unnecessary, or at any rate not required to mark out the locale as special and visible (the river is a highly visible entity in the Po plain) or to highlight the cult activities taking place there. Also, the corpus of offerings from Altichiero (19) seems to have very little in common with the offerings dedicated at another rural -or en route- site in the proximity of Padua (Montegrotto, 10) and much less still with objects found at sites in Padua itself or in the suburban Padova area (the domestic stipi (11-17), San Daniele and Pozzo Dipinto, 19 and 18 respectively).



Figure 6.6. The river bend at Altichiero. Photograph by author

Despite the differences in material culture and cult practices (liminality vs. fertility and healing) Altichiero (19) and Montegrotto (10) were landmarks, places of passage and of a boundary nature par excellence: their positioning along likely prehistoric Po plain routes in the case of Montegrotto- 10 (Dämmer 1986: 85 ff.), and the marking of Padua's northern boundary in the case of Altichiero (19).

Water, and the flowing river, could be perceived as transient elements in themselves, bearing witness to the passing of time, dictating the rhythm of life.

Another key element differentiating the site of Altichiero (19) from the contemporary sites in the Po plain is the lack of animal remains, possibly a consequence of currents and the erosion processes through the centuries. Also notable is the absence of drinking shapes among the ceramics pertaining to the Iron Age proper. The lack of objects linked with the natural and fertility elements is either a consequence of unfavourable post-depositional processes or the result of a deliberate choice of offerings.

Site name	Association with high places	Association with water	Association with settlements
Este Morlungo		V	
Este Baratella		V	V
Este Casale		V	V
Este Meggiaro			
Este Caldevigo	V		V
Abano Terme		V	
Montegrotto Terme		V	
Altichiero		V	
Camin			
Bertipaglia			
Mortise		V	
Mandriola			
Padua- urban			V
San Daniele		V	V
Pozzo Dipinto		V	V
Total	1	9	6

Table 6.1. Comparison of the local elements of sites in the Po plain

During fieldwork in the Po plain, it became apparent that the establishment of sacred places in specific contexts entailed a strong element of choice, of place awareness, of spatial identity and of intentionality that go beyond the simple decision to establish a votive deposit "near a settlement" or "near a river". Out of the overall available landscape resources, people in Este made deliberate spatial choices and sought the "right places" for the desired

activity, whereas the plains inhabitants of Montegrotto were drawn to the special-ness of the hot springs and the lake. Place, then, seemed to matter and be a significant factor in people's awareness of the sacred element in their lives.

Site longevity depended on their location insofar as the territorial and political connotations of the area were concerned: as already noted in chapter four there does not seem to be an explicit link between the location of a shrine, its monumentality or lack of, and the length of time it was used as a place of worship.

Lastly, the two funerary sites I looked at in chapter 5E, albeit being associated with the Este settlement, are positioned in very different places, and played different meaningful roles: an ancestral watch over the living for the northern cemeteries (Benvenuti, 8 and Ricovero) and that of symbolic and actual boundary for Capodaglio (see Morluno, 2).

In summary, it would seem as if place and space were indeed variables playing a significant role in the cult types and dedicated objects at different sites: they determined certain prerequisites that a place must have in order to be used for certain types of cult, by a certain part of society and at certain times (cf. a concepts found in Craik 1986: 56-57).

In terms of my GIS assessment, GRASS brought out a potentially significant pattern (fig. 6.7): according to the line of sight tool at a standard height of 1.60m the top of the Colle del Principe would have dominated a good view of the underlying area and enjoyed a visibility as far as Morluno (2) and possibly Meggiaro (6). Similarly, the sites on the hill slope and foot (Benvenuti, 8 and Ricovero) would not have been intervisible with the top. This may mean that space was meant to be experienced sequentially and not all at once, and there existed a processional way along the foot of Colle del Principe, perhaps headed towards Meggiaro (6), that revealed special places to cult participants one by one (cf. Craik 1986: 50 ff.).



Figure 6.7. Viewshed from Colle Principe (visible area in yellow)

6.2.2 The lagoon

Here I will offer an interpretation of my fieldwork in the Venetian lagoon and compare my findings with existing theories and interpretations found in the literature.

The two sacred sites in the Venetian lagoon do not have much in common in terms of landscape context, chronological life span or artefacts, but some similarities can be observed.

In virtue of its place in the middle of the lagoon, Altino La Fornace (26) was a topographically and symbolically liminal location, a place tied to water and to the ancestral land, redolent of ancient rites, keeper of past wisdom. It seemed to be a shrine for local worshippers but also a meeting point for different peoples, situated at a crossing of channels flowing into the Adriatic sea, a strategic, emblematic point of approach to the settlement on the sandy banks below it, a landmark for visitors and merchants as well as for the inhabitants of the northern lagoon.



Figure 6.8. The modern aquatic landscape of Altino La Fornace. Photograph by author

Lova (1) was also a place-specific shrine: it belonged to the land and its milieu as much as to the inhabitants of the lagoon. One of the differences from Altino La Fornace is that it was established during the Romanisation period, and abandoned shortly after Rome had secured its dominion over the Regio X, and not 'ex novo', independent of settlements, in the Late Bronze Age (26). The chronological lifetime of the Lova cult place (1), together with the dedication of a uniquely local typology of bronzetti (fig. 6.9), and the offering of local fauna (and possibly flora, but this is now lost) indicate a strong identity statement by local people, eager to establish their own cult place, to their own deity, in their own land, and possibly a sense of 'familiarity' (cf. Craik 1986: 56).



Figure 6.9. The Lova-type bronzetti. Photograph by author

I do not believe the Lova cult place belonged exclusively to Padua's political "territory" (i.e. the area politically controlled by Padua's authorities) and was exclusively a territorial shrine established by the people of Padua themselves because, as Bonomi herself admits,

"l'evidente dipendenza da Padova (...) queste argomentazioni avrebbero maggior forza se potessimo disporre di dati attendibili circa un impianto iniziale, ben più antico di quello noto, da riferire ad un'iniziativa della Patavium veneta".

[{in terms of} the evident dependency on Padua (...) these arguments would be more convincing if reliable data existed pertaining to a much earlier phase of the structures than the one we have, and that could be attributed to Venetic Padua]

(Bonomi 2001: 250, my translation)

She disregards the evidence for an earlier cult place advocated by Caenaro (see section B above) and, by stressing the late character and chronology of the site, argues that if Padua established Lova as an extra-urban, territorial shrine in a liminal locale, it is strange that they should do so at such a late date, into the full Romanisation period, and asks why they felt the systematic need to dismantle the temple complex when Padua went on to become a

major Roman site? I infer that the destruction of Lova was not due to an entirely political agenda but was an ideological statement made by groups native to the lagoon, and not Padua. I do not agree with Bonomi's other statement:

"All'indubbia importanza che il santuario dovette (...) investire per Padova va collegata la sua deliberata distruzione certo disposta da un' autorità, forse locale, ma assai più probabilmente centrale."

[We must link its deliberate destruction, most certainly decreed by an authority- perhaps local, but more likely central, to the obvious importance of this sanctuary]

(ibid: 251 ff, my translation).

There is no documentary evidence to this effect, and she assumes this occurrence, and attributes its agency to Padua's authorities because no local settlements were found that could be 'responsible' for the establishment and maintenance/dismantlement of the Lova cult place; however, the lagoon is a very variable and shifting environment, and physical traces of settlements could have been swallowed by the lagoon, as happened to certain Venetian islands such as Ammiana and Costanziano (Rosso 1983, also available at www.archeosub.it/articoli/laguna/costanz.htm).

Following my own place-specific assessment and analysis, the votive dedications of domesticated and wild animal and plant remains at both lagoon sites show awareness of the natural elements possibly connected with fertility concerns and expressing a sense of belonging to and dwelling in the land by 'declaring' a relative independence from contemporary Venetic settlements in the material culture, structure of the cult place and lifetime of the locale.

These two very different cult places suggest that the sanctity of nature, and the positioning of sacred places in topographically and symbolically liminal places such as rivers and the lagoon seem dominant criteria in the decision-making process behind the establishment of significant sites. One criterion seems to apply to both these sites, and that is the special landscape setting of each cult place. I considered the variables of setting, chronology, proximity to settlements and cult practices in a cross-site comparison, and found that length of site use and proximity to settlements are irrelevant in the case of Lova, a rural location with a highly individual chronological sequence. On the other hand, setting and chronology do not seem to fit a previously encountered pattern in Altino La Fornace (26): unlike other suburban or peri-urban sites in the Veneto (i.e. Este Caldevigo- 7, Este Meggiaro-6, San Daniele- 19), this ancient cult place does survive through Romanisation

and beyond, witnessing a dynamic rearrangement and reworking of the existing sacred space to a model more suitable for the cults of *Romanitas* and perhaps for early Christendom. Therefore it would seem as if site-specific positioning and the socio-economical components of cult did have a bearing on site longevity. See table 4.2 in chapter 4 for a detailed comparison of site longevity and landscape context.

There is a marked difference in dedications between Meggiaro (6), also situated on partially marshy ground in an alluvial plain, and the marshy lagoon milieu par excellence of Altino La Fornace (26) and Lova (1) (see above), two sites where worshippers dedicated typically local elements- local clay used in pottery making, river pebbles, aquatic bird remains and molluscs were dedicated or consumed in ritual feasts- at Meggiaro references to the marshy or plain milieu seem absent, if we exclude the ship-shaped lamina that may either indicate a link with the Adige or a 'journey'. Overall the types of votives from Meggiaro, unlike the cult places in the lagoon suggest that the core of the cult was the warrior elite rather than the local community at large.

The fundamental differences in site chronology, material culture and cult practices at the two lagoon cult places (three if one includes the still partly-published Musile di Piave) stress the need to treat Venetic cult places as independent entities, not in bulk, even if two or more sites belong to the same or similar environmental milieu.

6.2.3 The Piedmont

I will outline the outcome of my fieldwork in the piedmont and offer my interpretation of the landscape positioning and the significance of the material culture of these places.

I will argue that the northeast piedmont area relied on natural landmarks in the local terrain for the creation of a local cosmology of high or prominent places that represented the point of access to the superior world of divinities and often indicated their dwelling places. The location of major shrines at the start and end point of a natural hill amphitheatre -Mt Altare, 40 and Col Castelir, 42, but see also the alignment with Monte Piai (41) - (figs. 6.10 and 6.14 below) may have represented a special sequence of sacred points that watched over the local communities and protected the livelihood and interests of the local farming and stock breeding communities.

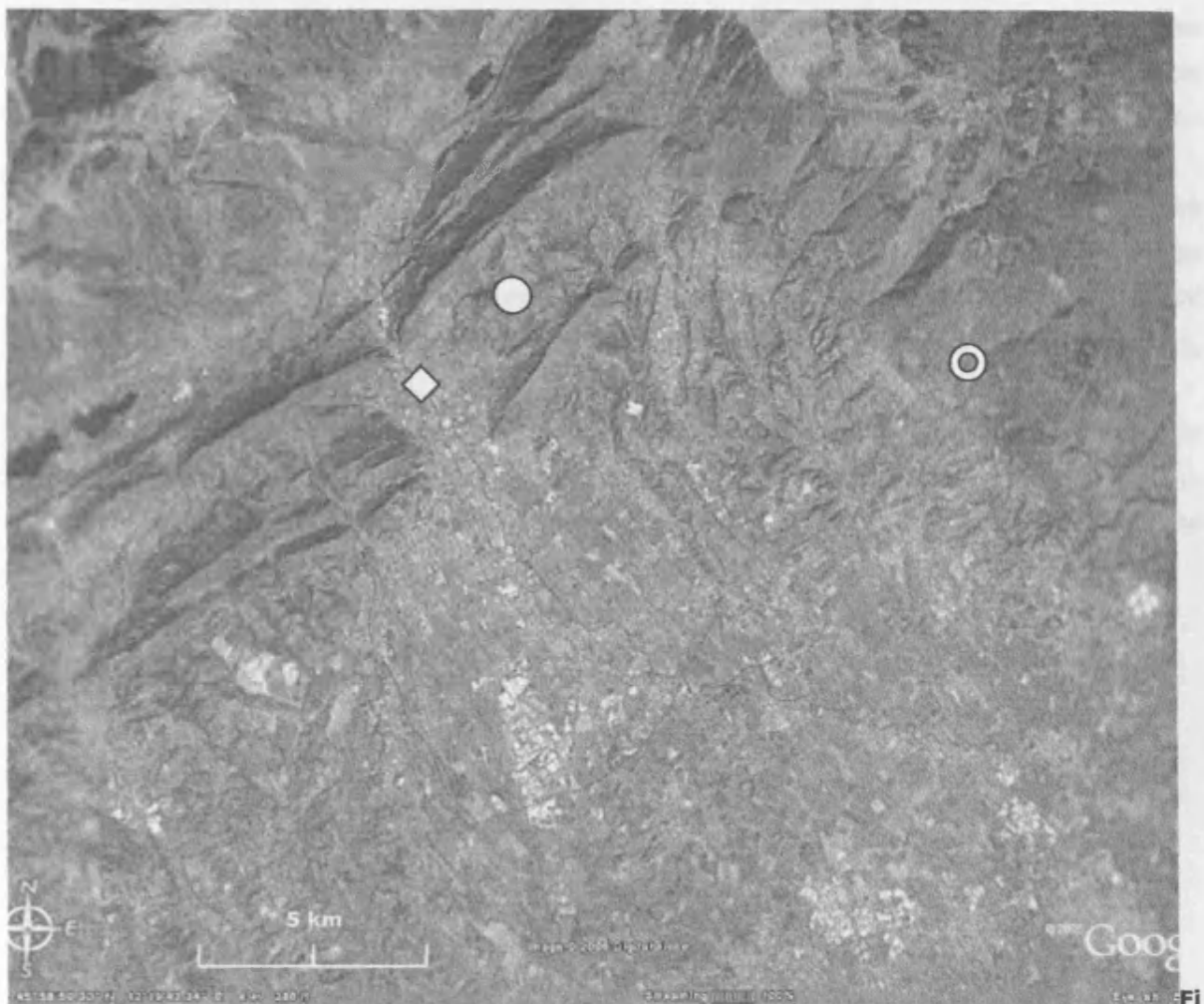


Figure 6.10. Diamond: Mt Piai; Circle: Mt Altare; Hollow circle: Col Castellar

The cult/sacred element of water was enhanced by the occurrence of significant water sources on high places or of mysterious origins, such as springs generated in the bowels of hills whence they absorbed minerals and elements that gave them a peculiar taste and appearance.

No survey work has been carried out to determine the presence or absence of any archaeological traces in the locations where rivers sprung from rocks in remote places, such as the sources of the river Meschio further north from Monte Altare in the localities of Savassa and Negrisiola.

In the case of Monte Altare (40), the sanctity of this place could have consisted of different aspects and arenas of worship: the fertility cult reflected by the ithyphallic bronzetti and the laminae depicting oxen, referring to the practice of pastoralism in the area and

possibly to the passage of transhumant shepherds along its slopes; and the worship of the peak or peaks of Monte Altare portrayed in the 'peak laminae', where the peak would be perceived as a liminal point of contact between the human domain on earth and the heavens (cf. also an observation found in Altenberg 2003: 109).

Similarities in the selection of specific hills and locales connected with water courses (among which is the small scale deposit of Scomigo (38) situated on a hillock very close to the course of the torrent Cervada) seems to suggest a concern with significant elements of the landscape even in areas that were not permanently settled (Castello Roganzuolo (36), Col Castelir (42), Scomigo (39).

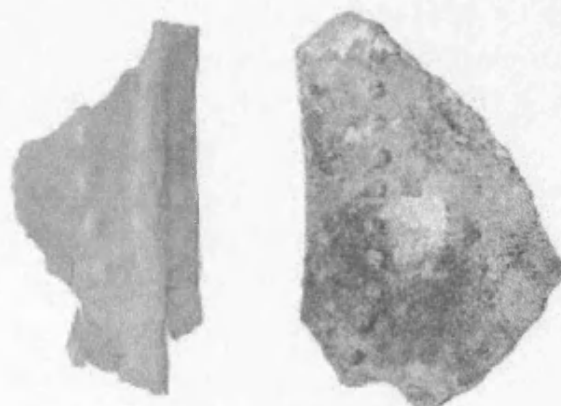
The great concentration of "sacred stations" in a geographically narrow area can be explained by their location along important routes and the local importance attached to the elements of prominent places and/or water by the groups and communities inhabiting the land in the Iron Age.



Figure 6.11. The Scomigo hillock (39). Photograph by author



Figure 6.12. Decorated lamina from Scomigo.



**Figure 6.13. Votive objects from Scomigo (bronzetti above and fragment of situla below)
Courtesy of the GAC**

At the west end of the piedmont belt, the cave of Bocca Lorenza is a liminal place full of fascination and a long story of use by different peoples in different periods: the point of contact between the surface and the bowels of the earth, light and darkness, variability in temperature and constant cold; Mt Summano was a meeting place of sky, earth and the underworld in the guise of the cave penetrating its core. The issue of “journey” and movement around and inside the site is two-fold: the physical movement around the site would have possibly implied the ascent to the peak of Mt. Summano, or the descent from the peak and the open-spaces of the slopes into the dark crannies of the sacred cave. Outside space would have allowed plenty of room for movement, the inside space of the cave would have allowed restricted, controlled movement, and as such would have been more suitable for funerary rituals, or secret and more intimate rites and activities.

A pattern emerging from maps, GIS spatial analysis and the archaeological record is the high density of votive deposits of different scales and periods of use in the upper Treviso piedmont, in the area stretching from Villa di Villa to the East to Scomigo (39) to the West, and from Monte Altare (40) to the north and Castello Roganzuolo (36) to the south (see fig. 6.14) If we consider the relatively high density of cult places in this area, and the relatively lower density of habitation sites pertaining to the Iron Age and Romanisation periods, we perceive a strong bias. I feel that they were likely to be locales along a sacred pilgrimage route, in a ritually special area.

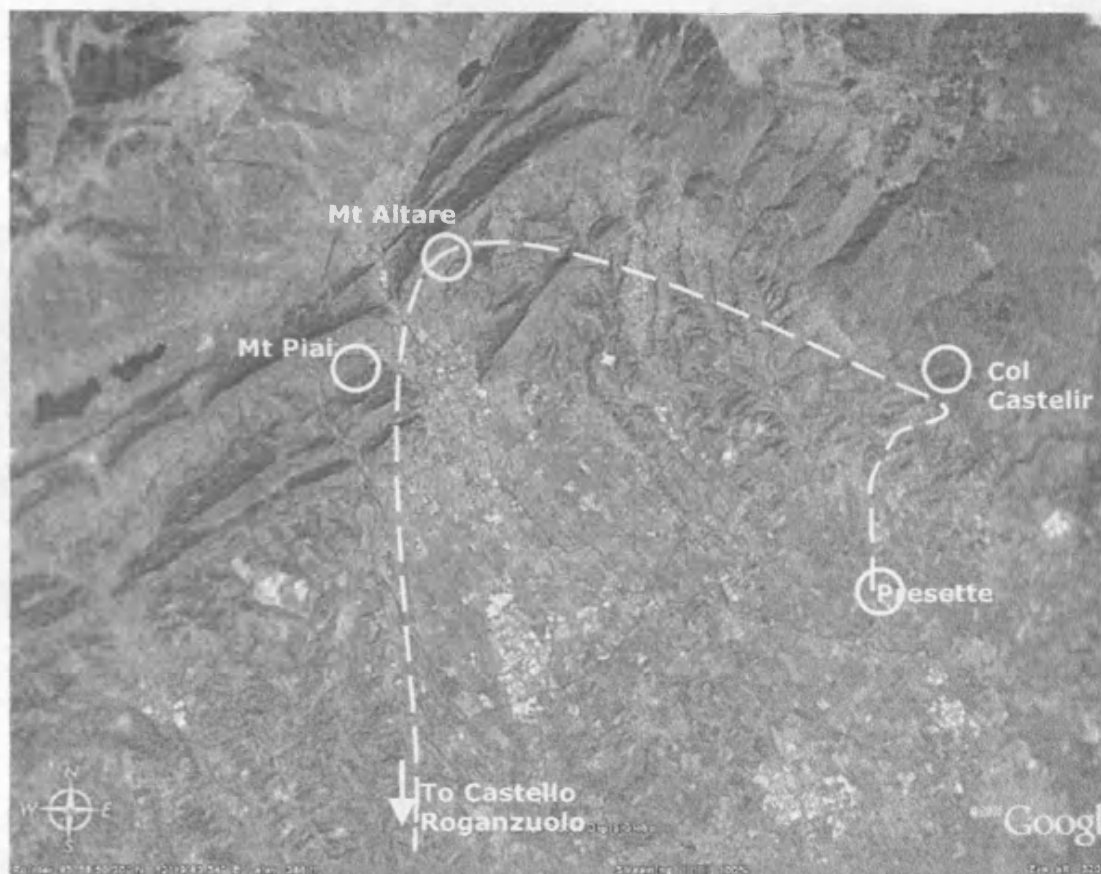


Figure 6.14. Tentative reconstruction of the 'processional way' going to and from Presette, Villa di Villa, Monte Altare, Monte Piai and South towards Castello Roganzuolo

The unequalled density of stipi votive in this territory compared to the rest of the Veneto makes the reconstruction of symbolic landscapes a more rewarding task than elsewhere, especially if we marry that with the evidence we have for pre- and protohistoric communication routes and transhumance routes through and out of the given landscape (cf. Arnosti 1996a: 94).

In terms of 'oddities', the locale of Monte Piai (41) represents an 'ambiguous' or distinctive location that was selected for the deposition of special objects, not associated with either a burial or a settlement site. The reason for its selection might have lain in the peculiar, highly recognisable shape of the peak and a local torrent flowing out of its depths. Even if not devoted to an explicit cult practice and not one tied to "peak worship", the hill was nonetheless outstanding for its morphological features, buttressing my theory that local dwellers were aware of significant landscape features in their construction and constant reworking of a sense of place.

The GIS brought out an interesting pattern: all sites (Monte Altare, Col Castelar, Presette, Castello Roganzuolo and Scomigo) are within a 20 km line of sight from the top of the hill, at a height of 1.60m (see fig. 6.15 viewshed)

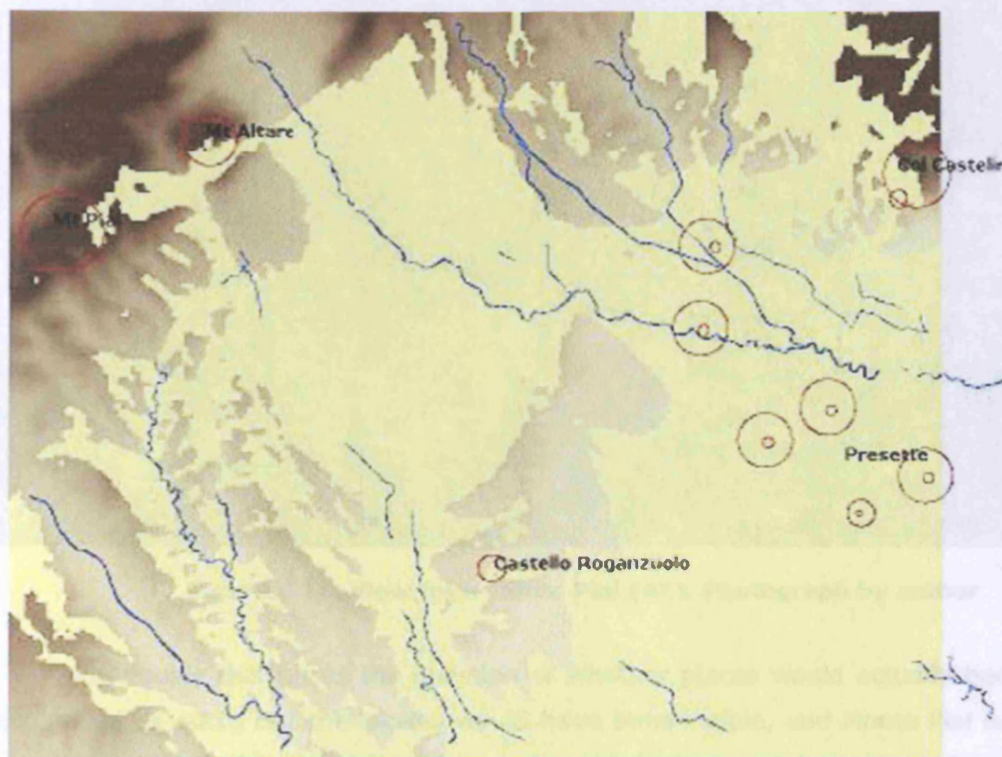


Figure 6.15. Viewshed from Monte Piai (41) in yellow

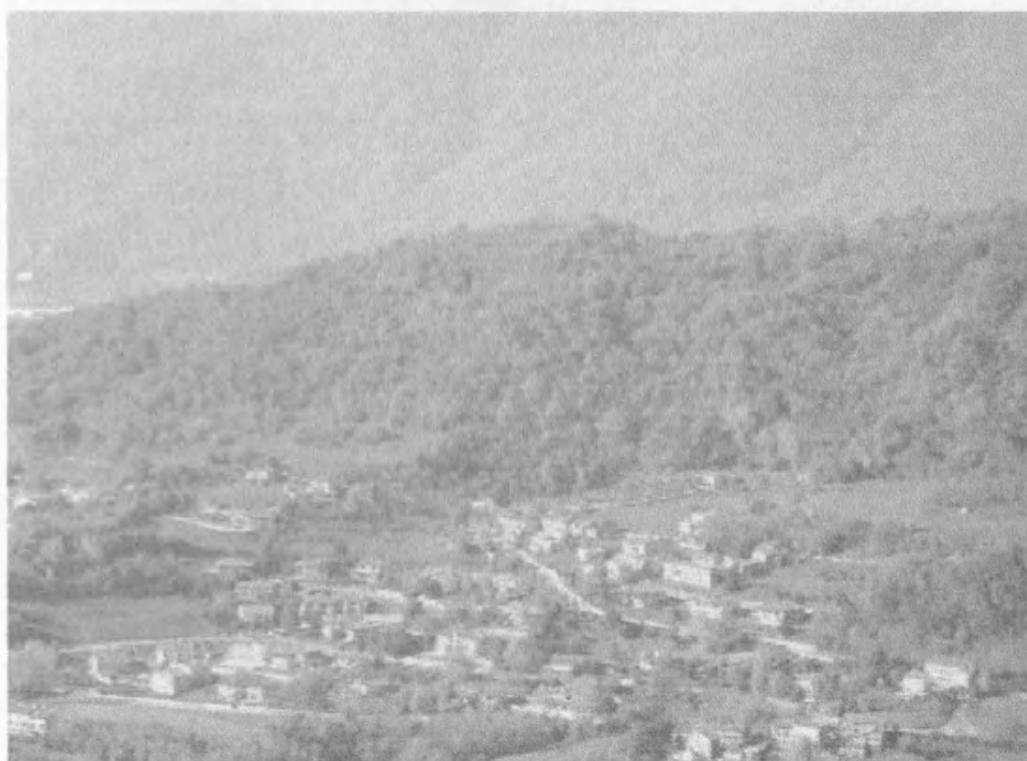


Figure 6.16. View from Monte Piai (41). Photograph by author

Obviously this raises the question of whether places would actually been visible and recognised as such, but the locales would have been visible, and Monte Piai is the only site where this is possible, in virtue of its being the highest point in the skyline. I have even wondered whether its lofty, pointy shape could not have been portrayed in the laminae found at the nearby shrine of Monte Altare (40), or whether a cumulative view of the local hilltops (fig. 6.17) could be the 'model' for the more 'crenellated', rugged lamina shapes.

Looking at the GRASS Y-matched, it is clear that both the sites on the westward and of the east (the Northeast platform) had a very good visibility of each other and of the middle hill-tops, in light of their more elevated context.



Figure 6.17. A lamina view? San Paolo, Monte Piai and Monte Altare looking West. Courtesy of the GAC

Looking at the GRASS viewshed, it is clear that both the sites on the westernmost end of the area (the Northeast piedmont) had a very good visibility of each other and of the middle locations, in light of their more elevated context.

6.2.4 The mountains

In this final topographic section I will illustrate the findings of my own fieldwork in the mountains and attempt an interpretation of the material culture and landscape positioning of the northern cult places.

At a first glance, it would seem as if these sites had more than one feature in common: not only are they all located in the Subalpine and Alpine region of the Veneto, but they are positioned along communication routes from the northern regions beyond the Alps and in a West-East direction to neighbouring region Friuli, and were isolated from contemporary settlements, which lends them the characteristics of both rural and en route cult places.

At Lagole di Calalzo (45), sacred springs might even have given the locale and possibly deity(ies) their name; the hillock Monte Nenz (46), attracted a multi-cultural mixture of cult objects, witnessing a passage of people in the Iron Age; the late Venetic shrine of Monte Calvario (47) had a complex cult system of libations and fertility unequalled in the upper Cadore region.

The northernmost site, and the one most closely associated with transalpine routes is Monte Calvario. In pre-Roman times, as well as later on in the Roman period, Auronzo di Cadore (47) was a strategically-positioned location: shrines could be established along the aforementioned route from Austria, as a series of sacred stopovers where one could stay overnight [such as travellers and merchants] without peril. I am convinced that somewhere close by the Comelico pass there could very well be another shrine. The track from Austria descended from Gurina to Forcella Gnas - a pass leading into the Cadore above Auronzo - down to the Visdende valley, then on to Passo Zovo, Costalta, the pass of San Antonio and Auronzo, terminating in the path passing at the foot of Mt. Calvario, 47 (Vitri 2001: 40; Zandegiacomo pers. comm.) (fig. 6.18).

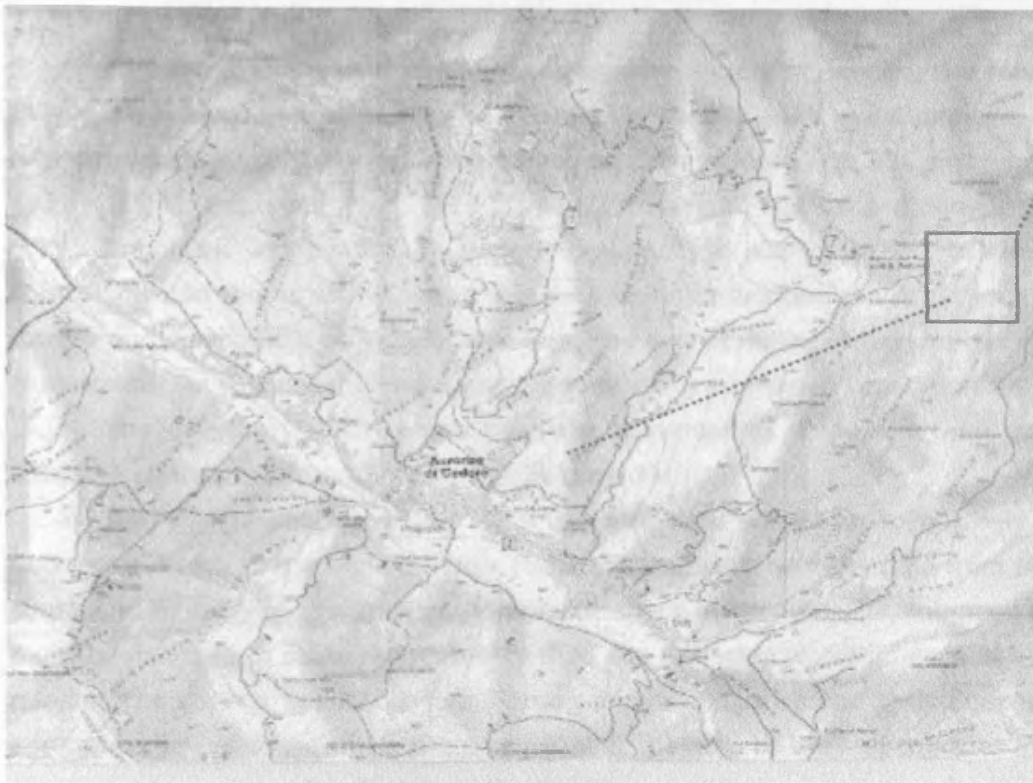


Figure 6.18. The square indicates Passo Sant'Antonio/Zovo and the itinerary from Austria

The common element between Lagole (45) and Monte Calvario (47) are the elements of literacy and inscriptions on votives. A ladle dating to the 1st century AD bearing an inscription in the Venetic script and language was recovered on Monte Calvario too: it was found in its primary context and is very precisely dated. This puzzled scholars and pushed down the "alleged" abandonment of the Venetic language and alphabet in favour of Latin with the advent of Romanisation (Zandegiacomo pers. comm.) The so called transition was not as abrupt and decisive, nor was it as early as previously believed but needs to be pushed down to the 2nd c. AD. Transition was not as smooth as thought and was slower and patchier than it was traditionally assumed. This is witnessed also by a 2nd century AD patera found in the Carnia bearing a Venetic inscription (Padovan pers. comm.).

Lastly, the meat preparation, roasting, cooking and slicing implements found at Lagole have comparanda with a San Zeno (Raetic) cultural facies (Zandegiacomo pers. comm.).

Lagole di Calalzo (45), as we have seen, was 9km to the south in the Cadore region, but also positioned along the route that went from the plains to the piedmont on to the transalpine regions, and facing the shore of the same lake, Lago di Centro Cadore.

In 1938 Alessio De Bon attempted a reconstruction of the ancient Cadore trackways (i.e. before the Romans established roads proper). According to him, the route passing by Lagole also touched the centres of Pozzale, Vallesella (44) and Domegge, in an Alpine itinerary leading up to Monte Croce Comelico at an altitude of 1,636 metres a.s.l. (De Bon 1938 (2001); Pesavento Mattioli 2000: 42 ff.; Pesavento Mattioli and Bonetto 2000).

Trichiana, in the Belluno valley, was not so explicitly tied to the trans-Alpine communication routes as it was not surrounded by a mountain range but on a relatively flat terrain and surrounded by woods. However, the overall milieu of the site has clear boundary connotations in the colder climate and predominantly evergreen vegetation.

The question remains, who were the communities or peoples who established and used the shrines in these Alpine and Subalpine districts?

Due to the paucity or lack of settlement data pertaining to not only the Northern Cadore, but also to the middle sector (Calalzo), and with only the data from Mel (50) in the south end to aid a reconstruction of domestic space in the Iron Age, the need for cult places must be ascribed to other requirements than the everyday worship needs of a community of people. The criteria applicable to suburban or urban shrines and votive deposits cannot be applied to any of these three sites, which is at the core of the inadequacies in the catch-all Atestine approach to all cult sites in the Veneto.

If we are missing the local context, the local peculiarities and cult features, very little can be said about the significance of these boundary sites, and comparanda with the southern quarter of the Veneto are far from helpful.

The material culture and contexts of these sites are unique to each. The bronzetti from Lagole (45) do not look like those from Este (2-7) (see below).

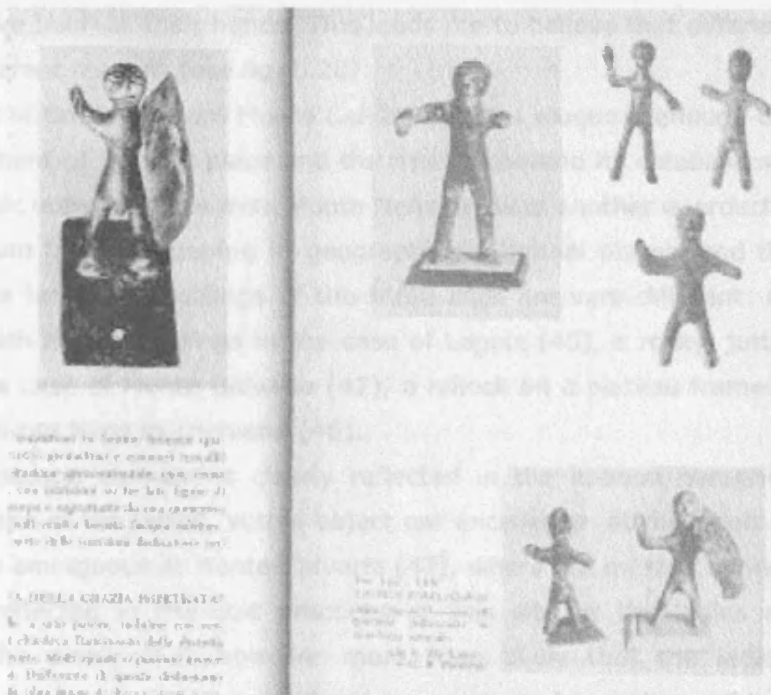


Figure 6.19. Bronzetti from Lagole (From De Lotto 1961)



Figure 6.20. Bronzetti from Baratella (3) from Ruta Serafini 2002 (ed.)

They seem to depict a different kind of worshipper or dedicator, both in term of gender and accuracy of the rendition of the human form, and by the types of objects they held- or are

supposed to have held- in their hands. This leads me to believe that different bronzetti were donated for different reasons (see fig. 6.20).

The lack of bronzetti from Monte Calvario (47) is eloquent enough to demand a site-specific assessment of the cult place and the motives behind its establishment, whereas the scarce, enigmatic votive objects from Monte Nenz demand another approach.

Aside from their positioning in geographically liminal places, and the isolation from settlements, the landscape settings of the three sites are very different: a wooded watery place riddled with mineral springs in the case of Lagole (45), a rocky, jutting out spur of a mountain in the case of Monte Calvario (47), a hillock on a plateau framed by the Dolomiti in the case of Monte Nenz in Trichiana (46).

The landscape element is clearly reflected in the libation paraphernalia at Lagole (45), in the shape of the ladles, votive object par excellence at this open air Alpine shrine; the link is more ambiguous at Monte Calvario (47), where hot mineral springs are known but not explicitly reflected in the cult practices at this site as the ladles are not explicitly dedicated to the deity; it is however more than likely that the ladles were drinking implements for local sacred water; finally, there seems to be no discernible link between the landscape setting of Monte Nenz (46) and the quality of the votive objects uncovered there, unless the key is seen as a symbol of passage (and an underworld connection, but also associated with women- see the key bearing goddess portrayed in the Montebelluna and Ponzano discs, Capuis 1998) and the hillock as a local landmark that inspired a sense of "specialness" in those who came across it.

The Northern sacred sites were also linked by a similarity in material culture, reflected in the bronzetti of Upper Piave Valley type, the weapon dedications and the apparent lack of representation of women. As for other types of dedication, one silver Noric coin of the 1st century BC was recovered at Lagole (45), of the same type as those found in abundance at the Monte Altare shrine (40), in Villa di Villa (42) and the stipe of Castello Roganzuolo (36) (Gorini 2001: 51 ff.).

Fogolari (Fogolari 2001: 376) claims that all bronzetti found at the minor stipi of Villa di Villa (42) and Mt Altare (40) belong to the cultural facies of Lagole (45), in the sense that Lagole was the only major stipe and centre for the production of bronze votives and worship in the greater piedmont- Subalpine area. I do not agree with this claim, seeing as both Mt Altare (40) and Castello Roganzuolo (36) yielded many fragments of bronze slag, sign of at least some extent of production in loco.

Fogolari does however allow for some extent of independence of Villa di Villa's cult place (42).

In Lagole (45), scholars make passing mentions of folklore surrounding the place, such as the aquatic nymphs Anguane, the aquatic goddess Sabassa (although Capuis does mention them in possible relation with earlier cult, cfr. Capuis 1998) - strikingly similar to the evocative locality of the springs of the Meschio North of Vittorio Veneto, Savassa- and the tradition for local girls to bathe in the lake waters from the springs for fertility? I believe this could be a link with ancient cults regarding water and bathing.

Marinetti and Fogolari believe that the name(s) Trumusiate- Tribusiati refer to a very specific milieu- a damp place, a marshy area, the surroundings of a spring. Where I would agree with a topographic reading of the theonym in light of the obvious importance played by the natural milieu in the cult, I will report that other scholars base their interpretation of the local cult of Trumusiate on Classical and Roman comparanda (Mastrocinque, as the *intrepretatio* outcome is Apollo) and on the sole archaeological representation of males (Whitehouse pers. comm.).

Cult objects and dedications might have changed with time and especially with the advent of Roman rule- but some places stayed essentially sacred. Therefore when there had been figurine dedications there were coin dedications- the same thing happens in Etruria (see Edlund 1987 and Fridh-Haneson 1987 for a mention of shift from figurine and anatomical votive dedications to coins in the Roman period).

Another significant prominent place is the burial locale on Monte Dolada (43), where high status individuals were buried on a "ledge" mid-slope on a mountain that was traditionally associated with transhumance routes. Interestingly, this mountain was right at the border with Friuli, and very close to the Cellina valley, just a few km to the East. Here was the votive deposit of Montereale Valcellina (38).

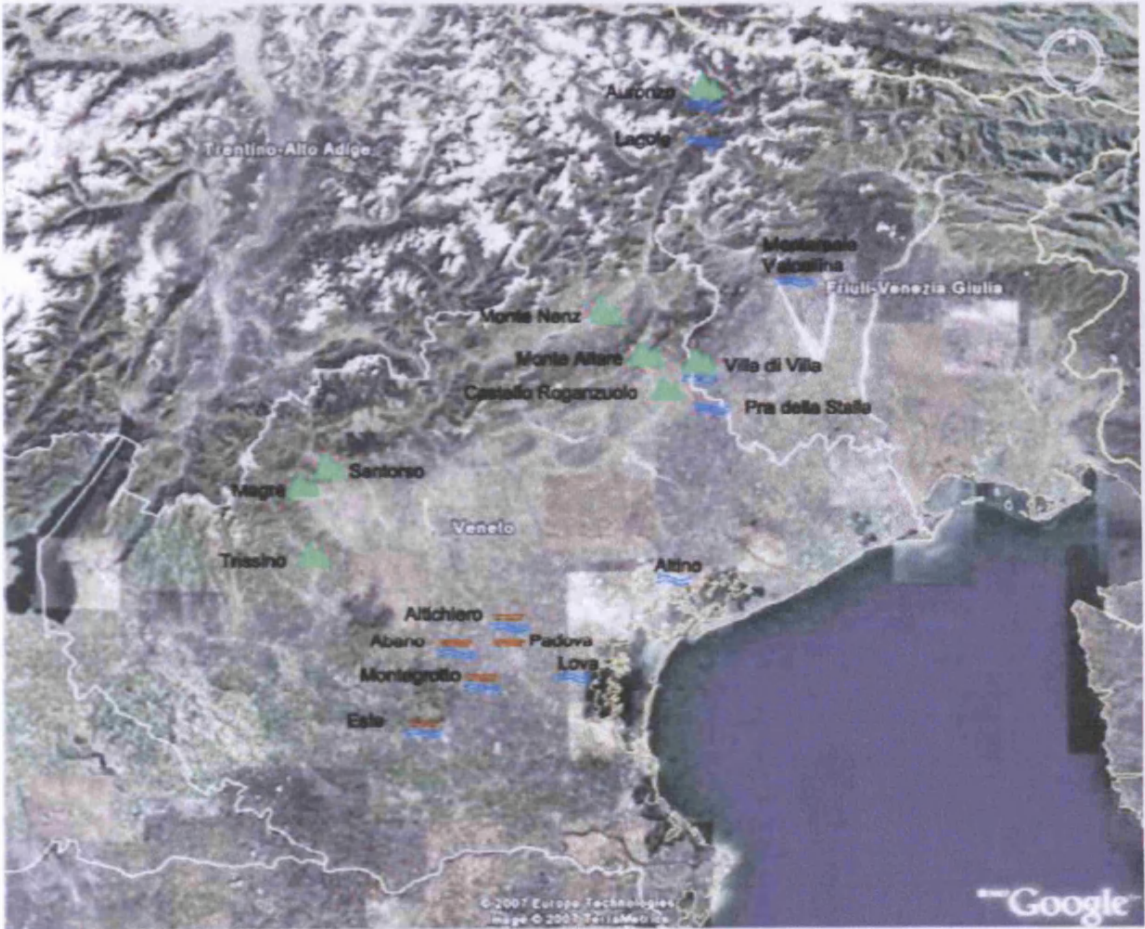
It is my understanding that the mountain area, and the meaningful sites associated with this area, were all about journeys, ritual and actual, across the Alps in a N-S direction and E-W across valleys and into the 'Celtic' territory of Carnia. A lot was going on in this part of the region, but sadly few archaeological traces remain: hence the paramount importance of visiting, experiencing these places and making associations between meaningful places, regardless of their regional (or National) location... (i.e. Austria, Italy, Veneto, Friuli etc.).

6.3 Overarching patterns and interpretation

6.3.1 Territorial distribution of sites: mapping out the symbolic land

After field-based and GIS-based analyses of the distribution of sacred sites, the types and quantities of votive objects and the relationship site-landscape I have quantified the sites

that apply to the hypothesis enunciated in the introduction and in chapter 3, that of the link between votive deposits and their landscape setting. As I stated in my methodology statement in chapter 3, I endeavoured to evaluate the connection between the visible archaeological evidence for cult at these locations (the dedicated objects) and their positioning in a certain milieu or in a certain place in the landscape, or again, the occurrence of certain natural features at or very near the sites.

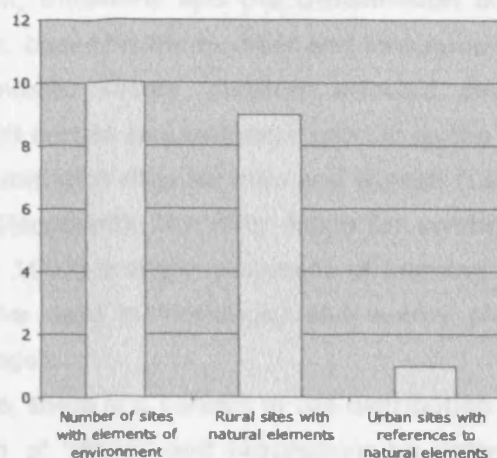


1	Monte Nant	Monte Nant	N/A		5
2	Monte Nant	Monte Nant	Monte Nant	Monte Nant	1000
3	Monte Nant	Monte Nant	Monte Nant	Monte Nant	300
4	Monte Nant	Monte Nant	N/A		5

Table 3.1. Table illustrating the different ways in which objects found at sacred sites reflect their relationship with landscape features.

Site ID	Name	Type	Votives reflecting context	Count
1	Lova	Rural	Seashells, mollusc shells	15+
2	Este Morlunco	Suburban	N/A	0
3	Este Baratella	Suburban	N/A	0
5	Este Casale	Suburban	Fishing hooks	5+
6	Este Meggiaro	Suburban	N/A	0
7	Este Caldevigo	Suburban	N/A	0
9	Abano Terme	Rural	Drinking vessels	10+
10	Montegrotto	Rural -en route	Drinking vessels	1000's
18	Pozzo Dipinto	Suburban	N/A	0
20	Altichiero	Rural	N/A	0
21	Mortise	Rural	N/A	0
22	Mandriola	Rural	N/A	0
23	Bertipaglia	Rural	N/A	0
24	Camin	Rural	N/A	0
25	Musile	Rural?	N/A	0
26	Altino La Fornace	Suburban	Aquatic species	20+
27	Altino Canevere	Suburban	N/A	0
30	Fossalta	Rural?	N/A	0
32	Magrè	Rural	N/A	0
33	Santorso	Rural	N/A	0
34	Bocca Lorenza	Rural- cave	Drinking vessels	0
35	Trissino	Rural	N/A	0
36	Castello Roganzuolo	Rural	N/A	0
37	Presette	Rural	N/A	0
38	Montereale Valcellina	Rural	N/A	0
39	Scomigo	Rural?	N/A	0
40	Monte Altare	Rural- en route	Hilltop laminae	140+
42	Col Castelir-	Rural- en route	Hilltop laminae	150+
44	VallesellaDomegge	Rural?	N/A	0
45	Monte Nenz-	Rural- en route	N/A	0
46	Lagole	Rural- en route	Simpula	100+
47	Monte Calvario-	Rural- en route	Discs, simpula	30+
48	Valle di Cadore	Rural- en route	N/A	0

Table 6.3. Table illustrating the different ways in which objects found at sacred sites reflect local environment and landscape features



6.3.2 Urban sites and rural sites: worlds apart?

The extent of the relationship between landscape positioning and settlements is apparent in the relative prevalence of suburban and rural cult places during the Iron Age.

My fieldwork shows that place-specific criteria led to the establishment of cult places in or near settlements that were different from the stimuli reflected in the positioning of rural or boundary locales. This is buttressed by the recovery of place specific dedications and gifts to the deities.

Looking at both the locales where the dedications were made and the nature of the objects, the following picture emerges: the inhabitants of Este, Padua and Vicenza seemed concerned with the welfare and symbolic protection of the inhabitants of the local centre from real or imaginary threats (neighbouring or distant groups and the dead). The positioning of sacred locales within the inhabited space seemed to either claim ownership of the land by claims to ancestry and cult of the dead (domestic shrines in Padua, the sacred Colle del Principe in Este) or shield the living from them (rivers as symbolic boundaries such as at Morlungo, Altichiero and Baratella).

The inhabitants of large centres such as Este established ceremonial centres devoted to, or focussing on, initiations and the transmission and preservation of the values and identity of the elite, based on the number and iconography of the dedicated objects, namely bronzetti and laminae. 'Urban' dwellers selected different places in their local land morphology to fulfill certain requirements specific to the specialised cult in question: a high place for selective initiation rites for men and women (Colle del Principe), a marshy plain for larger scale rites (Meggiaro), the river Adige for symbolic transitions and transformations (childbirth (Capuis 1993) and the processes of learning to read and write at Baratella, the separation from the dead in Morlungo) and watery places for healing and fertility cults (Casale and Morlungo).

Furthermore, there is a pattern in the distribution of initiation or coming of age rites: based on depiction of 'rituals' and processions on votives such as laminae and bronzetti, these rites only occur within the cult places tied to the communities of Este and Vicenza: that is to say, they are only found in protourban centres, with the notable exception of Padua.

In rural areas or boundary areas, my fieldwork suggests that people were more concerned with specific landscape features (Monte Altare, Col Castelir, Lagole, Montegrotto Terme) and the general wellbeing and fertility of people, crops and animals (anatomical ex-votos and animal figurines). In these boundary and rural places there are no traces of initiation or coming of age rituals.

In spatial terms, this reflects selective choices on the part of different types of worshippers: the ones belonging to a specific community that perceived the sacred element in their lived environment on the basis of local histories, ancestry and social structuring, and those who had an equally strong claim to the land, and identified more strongly with natural features and special places. After exploring the issue of the spatial and embodied character of the sacred sites (insofar as this information is buttressed by archaeological evidence) I will make a few comments on the bodily experience of sacred places, whilst in the following section (6.5) I will discuss in greater depth the extent of influence of landscape, perceived space and place on Venetic cult practices.

6.4. Phenomenology and sense of place

Awareness is a form of knowledge, and as the old adage goes, "Knowledge is power"; but knowledge has also an embodied element in it, as if one could not know something without experiencing it through the senses. Learning, leading to knowledge, is more often than not an aural as well as visual experience, and in some language the verb designating "to know" has the same root as the verb "to savour": i.e. the Latin 'sapio', the Italian 'sapere', the

French 'savoir' (Tuan 1977: 10). To know a place then, one is required to assimilate it through their senses first.

What is the implication of bodily engagement with places then? How does it apply to my data, to my sites?

As anticipated in the literature, sacred sites tended to exploit natural features such as peaks, springs, rivers and caves (Pascucci 1990: 47). Votives and ritual practices often reflected the landscape settings of sites as well as the cult typology and the dedicators. It follows, logically, that different cult demanded different locations. I set out to investigate this cause-effect relationship by looking at the embodied relationship between place, votive object and worshipper.

As noted by Brady and Ashmore (Brady and Ashmore 1999: 124), key topographic elements, whether actual, or idealised in imagination, provide models for "architectural mimicry" and influence the bodily interaction with such places. The human eye, and body, responds differently to open and airy spaces from cramped, secluded or dark locations. The same restrictions in experience and navigation one would expect from an architectural space could apply to specific natural settings (groves, caves, secluded hill tops).

6.4.1 Bodily movement and displaying symbols: the embodied element of space and cult practices

I looked at the spatial requirements of cult and analysed the embodied experience of being at each sacred place. I assessed whether the locations were spacious and allowed bodily movement or performance or whether the locations were narrow, secretive and suggest limited participants, sensory isolation and secrecy.

Out of all sacred places considered, thirty seem to have had an open air character, possibly concerned with the elements and nature, and were not enclosed by walls, although they may have been surrounded by trees that would have conveyed a feeling of enclosedness. Some (Meggiaro, Altino La Fornace and Monte Calvario) had walkways or pathways by means of which people were guided in or through the cult place itself, but the surviving structures do not suggest a fully enclosed space, with the exception perhaps of Altino La Fornace (26).

These thirty sites produced a notable variety of dedications: bronzetti, pottery, both life size and miniature, laminae, fibulae and personal ornaments, writing tablets, and animal bones; the variations in cult objects and dedications suggests that no particular type of votive object was tied to large scale or open air cults, or cults requiring a lot of room for movement.

It is interesting however to consider those cult places that had a 'secluded' or enclosed nature, such as the cave of Bocca Lorenza (34), the sanctuary complex of Lova di Campagnalupia (1), the early 'temple' of Altino Canevere (27) and the domestic shrines of Padua: these too yielded a variety of cult related objects and dedications, among which were bronzetti (Lova), pottery and personal ornaments.

Other enclosed spaces include narrow or spatially defined hill tops such as Monte Altare and Colle del Principe. At these locations, the possible processional element and the aural isolation experienced on the top indicates a different experience of situatedness and a different awareness of place than elsewhere. This could also have been the case for Lagole, where thick woodland surrounded the ritual area near the springs, although the cult focus was on the springs, not on the woodland location.

Out of all sacred sites, the ones that were 'monumentalised' from the outset (Lova - 1-, Altino Canevere-27 and Monte Calvario, 47) seem to reflect a desire to manipulate space, and affect the actual and perceived navigation of sacred places (see section 6.4.2 below on 'control'). Cult activity at these locales would have demanded a different approach, and had a specific impact on worshippers and inhabitants of the local area.

Another issue correlated to the embodied experience of sites is that of the display of votive objects or donations, indicated by hanging hooks or nail holes on votive objects, or pedestals in statuettes.

The aural element of the sacred experience could have been dictated by bells, wind chimes or the tinkling of votives together in the breeze. One such bell, an inscribed bronze one from Monte Altare, could have played an important role in the perception of place at this site (see below).



Figure 6.21. Inscribed Bell fragment from Monte Altare (40). Courtesy of the GAC

None display hooks or holes at Montegrotto Terme (10) and Altichiero (20) because votives were immersed in water and there would have been no need to publicly display them. Exposed or hanging objects would have affected hearing and touch as well as sight, especially if worshippers were invited or allowed to reach out and touch or append their own dedications, thereby enhancing the experience of the sacred.

Other senses, namely smell, would have been affected by specific locales where hot springs or the sea were present, or where the smells of animal sacrifice and sacred feasts would have enveloped the participants in an all-round embodied experience of the sacred.

Finally, the embodied experience of mutilation and ritually-inflicted pain (as suggested by the recovery of skin tissue in the amulets dedicated as part of the rituals, see chapter 5.A) would have proved the most intense (Meggiaro, 6). Anticipation, fear, pain and relief would have represented an all-round, once-in-a-lifetime experience for the initiates, and provided a memorable spectacle for those already initiated -or not- who witnessed the rites.



Figure 6.22. Modern day votive deposit in the Alpago woods



Figure 6.22 and 6.23 above. Distant echoes? A modern stipe votiva in the middle of the woods on Col Indes, Alpago, in the Prealpi. Photographs by author

Above is a photograph I took while walking off the beaten track in the woods with my family one summer morning.

Unexpectedly, we come across this 'impromptu' shrine to the Virgin Mary. It isn't indicated by any signs and the scattered offerings, including flowers, candles and personal ornaments such as earrings create an intimate and peaceful atmosphere, tinged with a delicate melancholy of times past, a pureness of beliefs almost extinct in this part of the world.

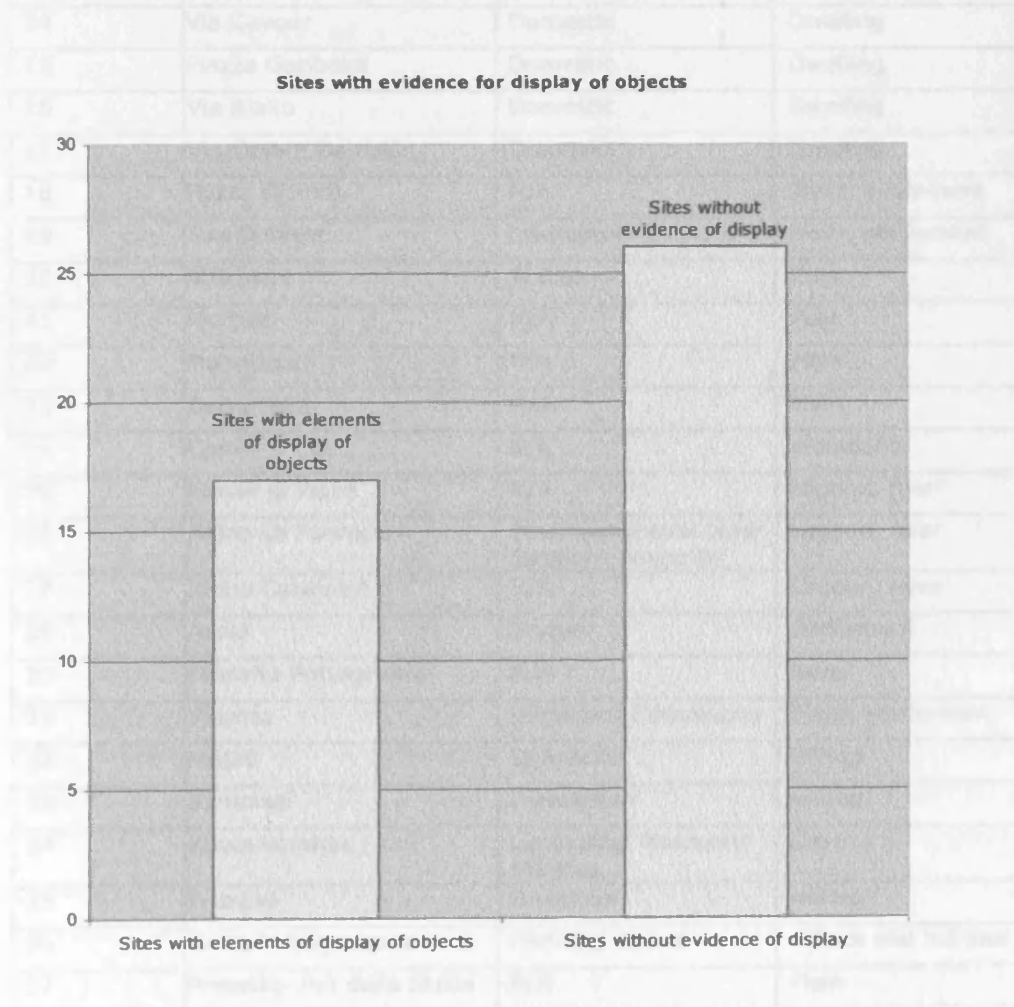
My father says: "Look, the woods are the church, here".

The morning is silent, and time almost stands still. Sunlight filters through the ancient pines all around us. I notice large rosaries appended to the pine trunks and branches and wonder if this practice is the echo of much older rituals that, like at this beautiful locale in the middle of the woods, required no substantial structures or temples to encase the holy element of place.

Site ID	Name	Votives with evidence of display	Total qty
1	Lova	Bronzetti with pedestal	4+
2	Morlunigo	N/A	
3	Baratella	4 women laminae + 6 face laminae (anatomical)- HOLES- 30+ statuette pedestals	40+
5	Casale	N/A	
6	Meggiano	Laminae	5+
7	Caldevigo	1 disc fragment, 1 warrior lamina (corner); 1 miniature "astuccio"; the Caldevigo goddess (hole)	4+
9	Abano Terme	N/A	0
10	Montegrotto	N/A	0
11	Ex-Pilsen A	N/A	0
12	Ex-Pilsen B	N/A	0
13	Piazza Castello	N/A	0
14	Pza Cavour	N/A	0
15	Pza Garibaldi	N/A	0
16	Via Rialto	N/A	0
17	Via Battisti	N/A	0
18	Pozzo Dipinto	N/A	0
19	S Daniele	N/A	0
20	Altichiero	N/A	0
21	Mortise	Bronzetti with missing pedestal	8
22	Mandriola	1	1
23	Bertipaglia	Bronzetti with missing pedestal	3
24	Camin	N/A	0
25	Musile	Votive discs	3
26	Altino LF	Bronzetti without pedestal	6+
27	Altino C	N/A	
28	Asolo	Bronzetti with missing pedestal	At least 2/3
30	Fossalta	N/A	
31	Vicenza	4 laminae w/ procession of women, 1 square lamina w/ 3 individuals; 2 w/ sequence of warriors	8+
32	Magrè	N/A	0
33	Santorso	N/A	0
34	Bocca Lorenza	N/A	0
35	Trissino	N/A	0
36	Castello Roganzuolo	6 laminae & a few bronzetti with missing pedestals	10+
37	Presette	N/A	0
38	Monteale	N/A	0
39	Scomigo	D/K	0

40	Monte Altare	8 whole laminae with holes, one with nail in place	9+
41	Mt Piai	N/A	
42	Col Castelir	73 laminae with holes out of 130 in total; 11 hooks and nails. 3 anatomical lamina votives.	87+
44	Vallesella	N/A	0
45	Lagole	1 horse lamina w/nail; 2 inscribed square laminae; bronzetti with missing pedestal	15+
46	Trichiana	Key	1
47	Mt Calvario	Discs, laminae	-
48	Valle di Cadore	Situla	1

Table 6.4. Table showing the occurrence of signs of display of votive objects



Site ID	Name	Cult practices-foci	Settings- context
1	Lova	Status/ liminality	Lagoon, river
2	Este Morlungo	Fertility/ liminality	River
3	Este Baratella	Fertility/ literacy/ passage	River
5	Este Casale	Fertility/ healing	River
6	Este Meggiaro	Initiation	Plain, marshes
7	Caldevigo	Initiation	Hilltop
9	Abano Terme	N/A	River
10	Montegrotto Terme	Healing/ fertility	Lake, springs
11	Ex-Pilsen A	Domestic	Dwelling
12	Ex-Pilsen B	Domestic	Dwelling
13	Piazza Castello	Domestic	Dwelling
14	Via Cavour	Domestic	Dwelling
15	Piazza Garibaldi	Domestic	Dwelling
16	Via Rialto	Domestic	Dwelling
17	Via Cesare Battisti	Domestic	Dwelling
18	Pozzo Dipinto	N/A	River, settlement
19	San Daniele	Libations?	River, settlement
20	Altichiero	Status	River
21	Mortise	N/A	Plain
22	Mandriola	N/A	Plain
23	Bertipaglia	N/A	Plain
24	Camin	N/A	Woodland
25	Musile di Piave	N/A	Lagoon, river
26	Altino La Fornace	Status/ancestral land/ fertility/ liminality	Lagoon, river
27	Altino Canevere	N/A	Lagoon, river
28	Asolo	Status	Settlement
30	Fossalta Portogruaro	N/A	Rural
31	Vicenza	Initiation/ Community	River, settlement
32	Magrè	Divination	Hilltop
33	Santorso	Divination?	Hilltop
34	Bocca Lorenza	Liminality/ Mortuary/ Healing	Cave
35	Trissino	Divination	Hilltop
36	Castello Roganzuolo	Fertility/ status	Hillock and hill foot
37	Presette- Prà della Stalla	N/A	Plain

38	Montereale Valcellina	Status	River
39	Scomigo	Fertility/ status	Hillock, river
40	Monte Altare	Fertility/ Status/ Hilltop	Hilltop
42	Col Castelir- Villa di Vila	Fertility/ status	Hilltop
44	Vallesella Domegge	Status	N/A
45	Lagole	Status/Healing/ libations	Woodland
46	Trichiana	Status	Hillock
47	Monte Calvario	Status/libations	Hillock
48	Valle di Cadore	Healing?	N/A

Table 6.5. Table illustrating the relationship between landscape context and identified cult practices/ cult feature

6.4.2 Restricted (elite) vs. large scale access to sites, and the issue of control: social implications of a sacred geography

The fact that status symbol votives are much more frequent in the south-west of the Veneto (Este) than in the north-east might indicate a statement of different needs, and reflect different identities and varying degrees of social complexity in the Veneto: this excluded Lagole (45), which was an en route shrine visited by a variety of people, soldiers and travellers. Symbols of fertility such as agricultural votives (be it miniature yokes, figurines or animal sacrifice) do also occur at the Este shrines (2 and 3) and at Montegrotto Terme (10), but to a lesser extent.

In Este the primary concern was with the well-being of the inhabitants of a well-defined settlement, with a social identity well expressed in ranked burials and specialist aristocratic places of worship (Este Caldevigo (7), Meggiaro (6)) and ultimately reflect the concerns with maintaining power roles and reproduction of the values of an increasingly stratified society. At Este Baratella (3) the sacred practice of writing was regulated by priests or cult officials who probably determined who wrote dedications to Reitia and what was written.

There could have been cult officials at sites such as Este Meggiaro (6) and Caldevigo (7), in charge of the organisation of the rites and leading the processions and performance that constituted the initiation process. A more organised type of cult, or a cult controlled and regulated by specifically-appointed persons could have required structures to spatially plan the sequence of events during ceremonies, or determine who had access to determined parts of the sacred site and when.

Venetic rural places of worship, or those not tied to a specific group or community, reflect the concern with local topography as expression of the mythic, supernatural or ancestral past (cf. van De Guchte 1999: 151, 165-166).

Shifting social and political complexity encoded in cult practices and in the selection and use of different locations find suitable counterparts in the flowing, ever-changing character of water (Lova, Altino and Altichiero).

6.5 The material culture

Material culture pertaining to cult is extremely variable in the region, as we have observed elsewhere. Below I will show how material culture can vary enormously even within a geographically limited area.

In the course of my votive object assessment I have observed that the differences in style and craftsmanship of laminae and bronzetti suggest a marked local differentiation of artisans and requirements.

In cult places where the social status of the gift *giver* was important, I found that it was likely that no expense was spared and that a refined product was selected (i.e. Baratella, 3 Colle del Principe, 7). At other locations, where the symbolic status of people, i.e. as soldiers or farmers was more important than the socially elevated statement of the elite, I found that the depiction of the worshipper was more schematised. This is reflected in the stylistic accuracy pursued in the southern cult places as opposed to everywhere else.

6.5.1 Influence of natural features and geographical milieus on cult objects: quantification and interpretation

In terms of the appreciation and perception of landscape, significant or sacred landscape features could be replicated in an idealised form in the objects pertaining to cult practices at selected locales, practices and cults that could reflect the specialness of place, the specificity of the local landscape as seen through the eye of the worshipper and the dweller, one and the same individual. Below I will quantify the impact of landscape elements on the votive objects in the region.

One quarter of all votive deposits explicitly reflect the local milieu or the local landscape: the dedicated objects reflect landscape elements in at least 10 sites.

If we take into account the implication of references to oxen and livestock as “references to the local environment” then the count goes up to two thirds: sites yielding cattle laminae or figurines, for instance. However, if one excludes urban and domestic cult places concerned primarily with the interests of the inhabitants of a specific settlement, (the Este, Altino, Vicenza, Oderzo and Padua sites), the remaining sites are 33. As seen in table

5 above, out of these thirty-three, one third reflect the local environment or even landscape features in the votive objects.

One must allow for the patchiness and uneven nature of the locations, stratigraphy, archaeological record and circumstances of various sites, however: these figures and percentages are therefore not definitive.

There are a further seven sites where the positioning of the stipe must have been determined by factors not archaeologically detected: i.e. local legend, myth, natural features since lost or poor post-depositional survival. For five of these sites the landscape features could easily have been among the topmost selection criteria: Altichiero (20), Magrè, Bocca Lorenza (34), Castello Roganzuolo (36) and Col Castelir (42).

At both sanctuaries located in the lagoon milieu, worshippers sacrificed/dedicated, among the other votives, aquatic birds (local species) and mollusc shells.

I anticipated in chapters 1, 3 and 4 that the search for patterns in an otherwise sketchy and inconsistent body of archaeological knowledge about votive deposits would be difficult. Regardless of their positioning in the vast region of the Veneto, a first pattern emerges: most of the cult places were positioned at liminal locations, in the sense of locales positioned along topographic and perceived boundaries, or at places perceived as the access to other realms, such as peaks (sky), springs and caves (underworld).

Local geography and individual communities influenced the selection of suitable locales: they vary substantially even in geographically restricted areas such as greater Este, greater Padua and the piedmont.

6.5.2 Local material culture patterns

The absence of a certain type of votive object is as interesting and as potentially revealing as the presence of an object. For instance, why were no peak laminae recovered from Scomigo (39) or Castello Roganzuolo (36), despite their common characteristic of being located on hills and hillocks?

Especially at Castello Roganzuolo (36) I was expecting one or two... even if representing the so-called "yokes". Even more interestingly, the fact that no such laminae were there could weaken the interpretation of the laminae as depicting yokes: the people using this site would have had the same subsistence and economic preoccupations as the worshippers at Monte Altare (40): if the "laminae" (figs. 209-211) do indeed represent a stylised reference to oxen, a reflection of local livelihood, lifestyle and fertility, why are they not found in Castello Roganzuolo (36)? If the laminae did represent yokes then they would be likely to be dedicated at all piedmont sites, as the rearing of livestock was most probably

common to all the groups living in the area and the bronzetti, on the other hand, are identical.

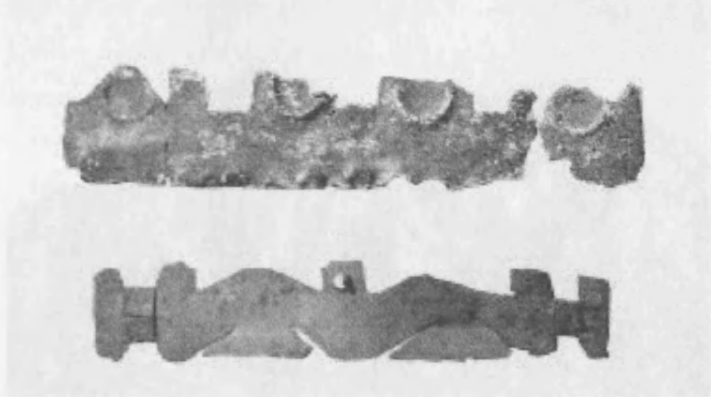


Figure 6.24. 'Geometric' laminae from Monte Altare

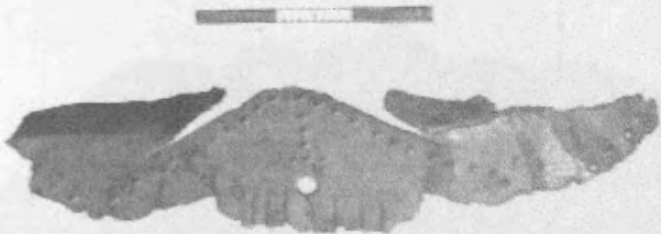


Figure 6.25. Peak lamina from Monte Altare

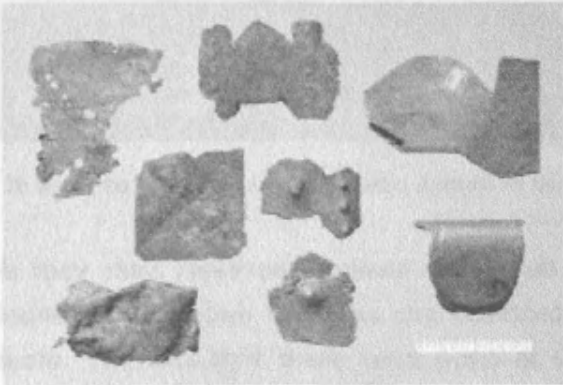


Figure 6.26. Laminae from Col Castelir (42). Courtesy of the GAC



Figure 6.27. View of Monte Altare (one of the peaks). Photograph by author



Figure 6.28. The way it used to look: a barren Monte Altare in the 1920s (by G Marino)

Therefore, I think they may represent stylised peaks- all the more so since such laminae are only ever found at these two locations characterised by prominent hills, and nowhere else in the Veneto. The fact that there were none at Castello Roganzuolo (36) means that the hill element may not been as prominent in the cult practice, certainly not central like at Monte Altare (40) and Villa di Villa- Col Castelir (42).

Particularly at Castello Roganzuolo (36), the cult area and ritual space was more extensive than the hill itself: the hill foot, the plain where the *favissa* with the sheep was and the plateau- landfill nowadays occupied by the vineyards.

This goes to show, at least in this geographically restricted area that produced so varied an archaeological record, that individual places and possibly communities demanded differential cult practices, and different votive offerings: that is because the *cult objects*-and/or the *deities* were probably not the same.

The overarching question is: if hot springs (*sulphur- bromide- iodine*) and mineralised water was so remarkable at Mt Altare (40), why are drinking votives not the most common or 'popular'?

I then considered the issue of different phases of different offerings. At Monte Altare, early offerings (EIA) are ritually damaged fibulae, subsequently replaced by the dedications of bronzetti and laminae in the mid Iron Age, along with laminae (Late Iron Age), and sortes (2nd century BC- onwards).

Laminae (IA)	Pottery- LBA& EIA	Pottery- IA	Bronzetti	Roman (sortes)
143 (whole & fragments)	3 fragments, no drinking shapes	12 fragments, no drinking shapes	23	38, 27 inscribed

Table 6.6. Quantification of material found at Monte Altare (40)

It could be that there was another, more predominant or crucial cult element, such as the hill top itself.

The rugged shape of Monte Altare, which varies according to where one stands, and offers different profiles from different perspectives, could have accounted for its selection as a special locale. An interesting parallel could be in the selection of natural features of the landscape in light of their "difference" or peculiarity of shape, colour or size as in Inca cosmology and perception of landscape (van De Guchte 1999: 163).



Figure 6.29. A snow-capped Monte Altare. Photograph by S De Nardi

I will return to the discussion of selection criteria for sacred locales in concluding section 6.6.

The votives

As anticipated above, I found that votive type and decoration/motif variation are related to site type and location:

- a) crenellated or peak shaped laminae never occur outside hilly contexts
- b) livestock-decorated laminae occur at sites associated with transhumance routes, but are notably absent in Lagole and the Alpine North (horses are typically portrayed there)
- c) anthropomorphic laminae occur in urbanised contexts (power centres) or, when they occur in rural areas, they are associated with animals, i.e. livestock
- d) ladles and drinking implements/drinking vessels only occur at places with 'special' water sources, i.e. springs

Figure 6.30. Lamine Stone 1129 of Villa. Courtesy of the QAC



Figure 6.30. Laminae from Este Meggiaro and Baratella from Ruta Serafini 2002 (ed.) and Pascucci 1990



Figure 6.31. Lamina from Villa di Villa. Courtesy of the GAC

I therefore suggest that the crenellated and "peak" shaped laminae from the NE piedmont could be read as a schematised version of heights and hills that had such a striking significance and visual impact on worshippers that they chose to mimic their appearance in bronze sheet artefacts. Tuan noted: "Perception of high places can sometimes be exaggerated. Lack of accurate measurements allows the imagination to run wild" (Tuan 1977: 40).

The fact that many such laminae (see figs. 6.24, 6.25 for Mt Altare; also 6.26 for Col Castelir) appear rather crude depictions of fortified or unaltered peaks could reflect the fact that some pictures, or depictions, are "highly schematised versions of their subject" (David and Wilson 2002: 2). In addition to this consideration, their exclusive occurrence at hill top or hill slope locales seems to indicate a will to portray the morphology of a place rather than refer to cattle yokes (Gambacurta, Capuis), because if it was so, "yoke" laminae would be found at other piedmont sites where local economy would have been essentially the same as at Monte Altare (40) and Col Castelir (42): yet these are absent at Castello Roganzuolo (36), Scomigo (39), Presette/ Prà della Stalla (37) and Tarzo.

This is not to say that some of these laminae did not represent stylised yokes, as no interpretation can ever be conclusive: my aim is that of suggesting a phenomenological and perceptual reading of the offerings.

The depiction of cattle, livestock, whether on its own or associated with a human figure, is also possibly a representation of a lived reality, of the embodied experience of the local landscape where the 'sacred' and 'profane' elements are one and the same, and grazing livestock is as much part of the lived-in environment of people as a hill, a creek and a cave. As a constant presence in people's lives and perceived environment, livestock become part of the collective consciousness and part of the heritage of the land people live on: hence the need to protect their welfare by dedicating models to the gods, as a sacrificial token and a manifestation of the community's interest in their livelihood.



Figure 6.32. Cattle lamina from Col Castellar

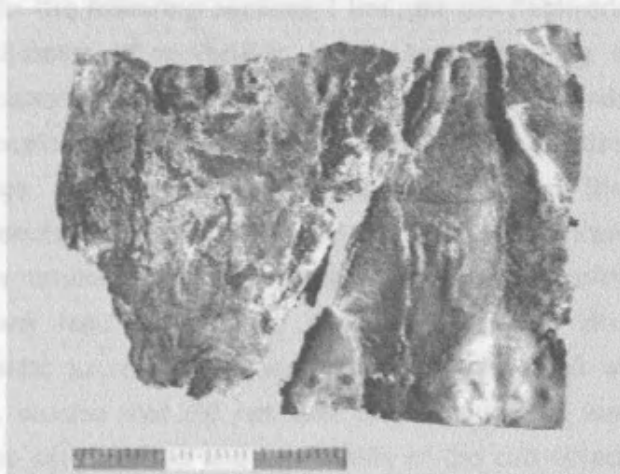


Figure 6.33. Lamina from Presette. Courtesy of the GAC

Fogolari (Fogolari 2001) wrote that the bronzetti made 'on site' in Lagole are the originals or a prototype of bronzetti in Northern Veneto, and argued that identical figurines found on Col Castellar (42), Gurina (Gailtal, Austria) and Monte Altare (40) would simply be imports from the Cadore shrine.

However, I will argue that not only do the Monte Altare and (40) Villa di Villa- Col Castellar (42) bronzetti have more marked genitalia (ithyphallic) but they have a somewhat less marked military connotation. Also, contrary to the theory that sees Monte Altare (40) and Villa di Villa (42) as marginal shrines that relied on Lagole (45) for material

craftsmanship, laminae are very different at these two locations, especially at Monte Altare (40) where the most abundant type consists of crenellated/peak shaped laminae, none of which have ever been found at Lagole (45).

This fact may suggest independent, in situ production at such shrines. Ritual smithing on site could be indicated by the presence of metal slag, which may have been a dedication in itself, or residue from metalworking. Also, Maioli and Mastrocinque (1992) argue that the iron knives found at Villa di Villa were used to sacrifice animals to the deity and then dedicated. (Maioli and Mastrocinque 1992: 40). They also argue (ibid: 168) that certain tools that were found, along with the very place-specific votive of the peak laminae, indicates local production for local cult practices.

6.6 Conclusions: making sense of a diverse body of data

This chapter started by concluding the 'journey' part of the Venetic travelogue and presented an account of Venetic cult places and landscapes from a largely regional, milieu-specific perspective. In the following sections I brought the fieldwork results together in an all-encompassing discussion of a Venetic *genius loci*, analysing the different variables, perceptions and concepts entailed in the process of living the landscape and worshipping deities for Venetic peoples of the Iron Age. I have introduced a tentative interpretation of my fieldwork findings and offered a few observations on the roles of landscape, situatedness, local identity and sensory perception, and the significance played by place and material culture in the nature and offering practices in Iron Age Veneto.

My observations lead to a more holistic, embodied, situated and 'multivocal' interpretation of Venetic sacred sites than has previously been offered in synoptic and monographic studies, studies that did not take into account the landscape settings of cult places and ignored the situatedness and materiality of the cult objects. I draw upon studies in humanistic geography to further explore the significance of *genius loci*, places and situatedness, and ways in which different individuals interpret and live landscapes and place (Relph 1976, Craik 1986).

Compared to the sacred landscapes of the Marche mentioned above, the Venetic landscape was, and still is, more varied. The highly localised character of cult bears witness to, and is a common denominator of, these diverse places and landscapes within the region. This should be seen as a strength rather than an encumbrance. But how can we begin to understand the complexity of Venetic cult places in an endeavour to look beyond the style of votive objects? It is my belief that the different meanings entrenched in the landscape settings and cult objects can be seen as a strength, a point of comparison leading to a

holistic assessment of place and to an understanding of the 'sphere' of the sacred in the land during the Iron Age.

In the following sections I list a few ways in which a better understanding of Venetic cults can be achieved by moving beyond the excavation trench and museum display case out into the 'open air'. I strongly maintain that on site fieldwork should be a component of any assessment or study of cult places universally.

6.6.1 'Monumentalisation': how natural are natural places?

One traditional view is that conceptual ordering of space was made possible by monument building as opposed to the preservation of irrational, spontaneous natural settings (of unaltered places in a landscape) (cf. Bradley 2000; Brady and Ashmore 1999).

Is there a difference in the perception and interaction with 'natural' places?

If monuments and structures are perceived as a means to constrain movement or access to sites or to specific parts of sites (cf. Thomas 1991), this is not automatically excluded by natural landscape features that, by their own nature and positioning, offer significant bodily constraints. This is the case of steep hills, mountains and caves.

For instance, the descent into the lower chamber of the cave of Bocca Lorenza (34) would have excluded the elderly, injured and heavily pregnant women, and this without the slightest structural aid.

How, if at all, did monumentalisation of sacred deposits alter their significance? Although not encompassed by the chronological timescale of this thesis, I was keenly interested in the ways the Romans interpret existing Venetic cults, and asked how the votives reflect this change. One way to look at this is to ascertain how votives change *after* monumentalisation.

At 9 out of the 12 locales that lasted as cult places during and after Romanisation, later offerings reflect the nature and extent of indigenous votive objects, whether in the form of bronzetti, coins or laminae.

However, as can be seen in appendix A, under the item "monumentalisation?", only a minor proportion of Iron Age votive deposits (7 out of 43, amounting to one-sixth) was monumentalised at some stage of its existence, and nearly always after Romanisation had taken place.

It is my understanding that the Romans did not build features or temples at certain previous indigenous cult places because of unwritten rules forbidding them from altering, manipulating and "polluting" a special locale (Steuding et al. 1897: 145; Matthews and Matthews 2004: 60 ff.). However they did build temples at selected locations, mainly coinciding with key settlements (Baratella in Este, 3 and Vicenza Piazzetta San Giacomo) to

Finally, I also looked at place significance and likely patterns of interpretation and feeling of places through time, as our understanding of a particular locale is shaped by what happened in it, and to it, after the period in which Venetic peoples worshipped their gods and experienced their land in meaningful ways.

I believe such an outlook and multidisciplinary approach is applicable to other contexts, other periods and other areas, so far as systematic parameters are used for every examined topographical entity and place, in explicit terms that make the exercise repeatable by anyone, and by producing a carefully material-based assessment to go with the landscape assessment and phenomenological experiencing of sites.

During the course of my research I became increasingly aware that my knowledge of place use and significance in the Iron Age, Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods kept on overlapping, feeding into each other and leading back to each other in a meaningful whole, so that at times I regretted having to impose a chronological 'break' to my thoughts, observations and interpretation happening in the field and while writing up.

Now I understand this reluctance was due to the fact that chronological 'compartmentalisations' are unhelpful and not appropriate to any in-depth understanding of places and landscapes. A 'full', multi-period and multi-scale understanding of place significance and landscape perception can really convey a feel for a place, inform and complement our knowledge of a particular period of use and, among the other things, help the researcher of prehistoric landscapes to identify some of the factors influencing his/her interpretation of present landscapes.

Due to the chronological scope of this thesis I had to limit most of my investigations to the Iron Age and Romanisation periods: however, future work will build on my 'pilot study' of Monte Altare/Ceneda and will explore other areas of the Veneto with long histories of use and long-lived and complex patterns of significance. These places are Colle del Principe in Este, Lagole, Monte Summano and the cave of Bocca Lorenza in Santorso and, last but not least in importance, the lost islands of the Venetian lagoon. This will be a phenomenological study of how medieval dwellers may have experienced the islands as 'home' and the ordeal of abandoning their dwellings and their churches, giving them up to the sea- the heartache felt when 'culture' succumbs to 'nature'.

The fieldwork map of Monte Altare (C1) is a densely narrative palimpsest of symbols and meanings past and present, a multiplicity of vistas, a journey across 'time and space' as it were. It breaks down the barrier between nature and culture in a meaningful whole where natural elements such as springs and peaks and lost and existing buildings and structures make up several overlapping landscapes within one landscape, and tell a story in multiple

voices: the map reveals and hides locales, places appear and disappear. The hill and its surroundings reveal their many 'moods'¹⁰ (à la Heidegger) through the eyes, perceptions and actions of many.

There is the need for a more widespread application of theories and methods of 'humanistic' landscape archaeology, traditionally confined to prehistory, to the *longue durée* of places, and to search for meanings in prehistoric, Roman, post-Roman and medieval landscapes as a whole.

The work of Paul Basu is innovative and holistic in that it embraces the appreciation and reconstruction of a historic landscape from an archaeological, phenomenological and perceptual, as well as historical and ethnological, perspective, and this cross-disciplinarity makes it a meaningful and 'rich' piece of research into places, people and memory, resentment and hope, a story told by one and many, achieved by integrating interviews, poetry and photography into the plot (Basu 1997).

Insights into the embodied experience of people interacting with places and thick, 'phenomenological' descriptions of landscape in the historic period are not only possible, but desirable to complement historical sources. That way the landscape archaeologist/historian would be able to engage with places in creating meaningful topographic histories that go well beyond the artefact and trench analysis and the typological study of objects, but also beyond the documentary monologue or the sterile appreciation of places in standard 2D maps.

If the starting point of my research was the Iron Age, its destination is the long term and the stratified awareness and navigation of places bearing witness to centuries or millennia of signification and specialness. History, archaeology and human geography can potentially collaborate in fruitful and challenging ways to reconstruct and bring landscapes to life. This thesis has attempted to do this to the extent allowed by the chronological restriction to the Iron Age.

Phenomenology: you are here

Much as we can only suggest an interpretation of the way a worshipper lived the experience of visiting a sacred site, or participating in rites at a particular locale, we can draw inferences by a) the landscape positioning of the said locale, b) the nature of the cults and c) the nature of the votives.

By applying my method to Venetic places and objects I was able to evoke and experience an embodied sense of place and 'embodied' interpretation of the artefacts known

¹⁰ Moods are the disclosure of the different ways in which things in the world can 'matter' to Dasein. *Sein und Zeit*, p. 141 ff.

as “votives”, and to establish that at many sites these objects were significant, all the more so as they were often produced on site by itinerant artists, as indicated by the slag remains at the piedmont shrines and by the similar finish of the two-sided bronzetti (Arnosti pers. comm.).

The on-site smithing of the cult objects (i.e. bronzetti and laminae) could have entailed sights and sounds that reminded the cult participants why they were there, and what they had come to expect and experience at a certain cult place, i.e. the donation of objects to the deity and their prayers, or participation in determined rituals. The hanging of bronze artifacts such as figurines, laminae and pendants to tree branches, perishable structures or sacred features of the landscape such as rocks could have provided an unique aural as well as visual experience (the ringing of charms and laminae against each other, or when struck by wind or breeze, or bells where evidence exists- like at Monte Altare, 40). The added element of water in its many forms could have added to the aural sense of specialness of place (the bubbling and flowing of spring water, or the flowing of rivers or torrents) as well as appealing to the senses of taste and touch (water used to quench the thirst of pilgrims, and to purify them, the coolness of the water on their skin). In the cases of a few sites, smell could have been central to the experience too (Montegrotto Terme, 10) and Abano Terme (9). In the cramped environment of the cave of Bocca Lorenza, the use of incense or other sense-enhancing substances would have provided an even more intense sense of locatedness and otherness, albeit traces of such substances have not survived.

Finally, the frequent practice of animal sacrifice in itself engaged the senses, be it in the shrieking of the sacrificial victim, the sight and smell of blood and the smoke generated by the burning of the carcass or the preparation of meat for sacred feasts.

The presence of hanging holes and hooks on many artefacts recovered from cult places all over the region bears witness to a likely importance of the visual and embodied experience of place, where votive objects had to be displayed before being interred at the end of the ritual cycle for which they were donated in the first place: this is reflected on a variety of objects from such diverse contexts as Colle del Principe (7)- the so called Caldevigo goddess- to the Mt Calvario discs (47) via the cattle and peak laminae from Mt Altare (40), Col Castelir (42) and Castello Roganzuolo (36).

Cults, and their participants, should be looked at in their original context. Making allowances for landscape change and the necessarily subjective nature of perception, a few observations can be made. One example: the landscape of the hilly piedmont is very different from the volcanic peaks of the Colli Euganei in the Po Plain, seat of such cult places as Montegrotto Terme (10) and Este Caldevigo (7). The experience of heights, of climbing

up hills feels different in these two parts of the region. Hills and high places would have presented a very different impact on people's imagination and perception according to where they were located, how familiar they were to the local communities and how well they blended in with the local landscape (cf. Edlund 1987: 48). The sight of a hill or peak would have conjured up different perceptions and feelings in an inhabitant of the Cadore from, say, an Atestine or a dweller of the hilly piedmont. That may be why the importance of high places seems to decrease the further north we pursue our investigation into Venetic cults.

Few of the available hills in Este and thereabouts were exploited for ritual purposes, but statistically they are more relevant than the many hills and hillocks attracting special activities in the Monte Altare (40) and Col Castelir (42) environs. On the other hand, the presence of special, culturally-imbued heights and hills demanded worship for reasons inherent to the hill's morphology or what it symbolised (the residence of a god or goddess, the gateway into the world of the dead or to the sky above).

Then again, as Ingold aptly put it, "through the exercises of descending and climbing, and their different muscular entailments, the contours of the landscape are not as much measured as felt - they are directly incorporated into our bodily experience." (Ingold 1993: 166). The difference between approaching a high place, descending into the bowels of a mountain or crossing a river entail different bodily experiences, and as such may be imbued with different meanings, and generate different impressions on who performs the act of approaching, and reaching, a specific locale.

I would like to go further still and to suggest that certain natural landscape elements gave place a narrative and performance value, they were experienced as structured and could, by their own topographical nature, guide visitor and worshipper navigation, determine modes and extent of accessibility and dictate 'a sense of place' without the help of humanly-constructed elements. The selective exposure or display of sacred objects and the act of animal sacrifice and human mutilation could have also created a structured space within the 'shrines' by marking out distinct cult activity areas and contributing to the way a person experienced a place.

6.6.4 Conclusion: the end of a journey through meaningful landscapes

Was landscape important for Venetic peoples, and was it a criterion for the positioning of their cult sites?

Yes, landscape mattered in people's everyday lives and in their relationship with the sacred. Moreover: the exhibit or exposure of votive offerings, with their impact on the senses, and the very open-air nature of most cult places allowed a more direct interaction and communion of people- place and landscape. Particularly so at hill top places where the

top and slopes were not to be enclosed or altered as to not compromise the embedded sanctity of the locale, or watery places where water should not be channelled or enclosed in temple structures.

The context-specific assessment of each cult place and each part of the landscape of the Veneto leads me to formulate a series of considerations:

a) there is no such thing as one 'Veneto' or one 'Venetic' society: the fragmentary and varied nature of material culture, funerary and cult expressions, literacy and settlement strategies reflect a series of individual and differently interacting communities and groups who had a certain degree of independence

b) different groups were exposed to different cultural stimuli according to where they lived: the inhabitants of the Po plain were not affected by interaction with transalpine La Tène and Raetic milieus any more than an average Cadore dweller had first-hand experience of Greeks and Etruscans. This may have led to independent identities scattered throughout the region, some of which easier to recognise archaeologically (i.e. *Altno*) than others.

c) the degree to which artistic and cult expressions and literacy were spread in the region is subject to strong local differences, leading to a bias in research and understanding of Venetic culture: however much this situation owes to the physical nature of the region (i.e. mountainous and wooded vs. open and flat), the patchiness of recovery and negative evidence due to early excavations, dramatic variations in the region are more likely to be due to localised trends and ways of living, worshipping one's deities and representing and prioritising local values and interests

d) the absence of evidence becomes as interesting as the presence of a certain attribute or material culture item: i.e. the lack of portrayal of women in the Northern Veneto.

After an assessment of the varied expressions of ritual in the Veneto, I will argue the following instances as regards the manifestation of situatedness of cult practices in the Iron Age:

- Local landscape awareness, place-specific interaction with places and cult patterns are reflected in the uniqueness of rites and offerings
- One general trend or pattern is visible: urban sites have different priorities to rural sites
- There is a narrative element in certain sites layout and votives depicting processions
- Issue of elite vs. large scale access to sites reflects social concerns of urbanised groups and issues of control within the cult structure

- Piedmont: local cults focus on springs and peaks (or caves like at Bocca Lorenza)
- Este: different worshippers select different contexts for different purposes
- Lagoon: the sacred element lies in the liminality of symbols and its actual positioning
- The symbolism of rivers is frequent in the area around Padova (S. Daniele, Pozzo Dipinto, Altichiero) and mirrors practical and ideological concerns with the boundaries of specific territorial units (i.e. Padua)

What are the main achievements of this study?

I have sought to present my work, my findings and my interpretation in a visual, sensual and narrative manner, going beyond the standard written fieldwork report, and I have attempted to convey a sense of embodied place and to tell a story in words and pictures (cf. Shanks 1997).

This has, I believe, been my most effective contribution to the study of Venetic cult places: there had never before been a study of 'meaningful landscapes' of the Veneti, but a detached, laboratory or museum-based study of objects in their own right, in which the votive deposits were only considered in terms of the objects without a sound cultural and interpretive context.

I sought to do justice to the beauty, variety and originality of the locales and places I travelled to, through and from in my quest for meanings and perception, in order to compensate the inadequate representation (in visual terms) of these sites in previous publications. By creating a series of meaning-laden 'montages' in the experiential maps (cf. Shanks 1997: 84) I have endeavoured to convey the thick, intense complexity of objects, places, histories, memories, fear and attachment, dwelling and abandonment, hereeness and otherness.

On the whole I have sought to bring these people and places back to life through a *topo-analysis* (Bachelard 1957) and an exploration of the mutual discourse between people and places past and present; I also hope I have brought to the fore the importance of local knowledge and experience of places in the 'construction' of archaeological knowledge(s) and practice.

In summation, I believe a humanistic approach to places and landscapes is necessary in order to grasp the overall picture of what cult, and the sacred, meant to the inhabitants of the Venetic landscape, and what it meant to inhabit a particular stretch of land in terms of community identity, values and preoccupations and their reflection on cult practices and

material culture. On a broader scale, it can be inferred that places became part of material culture whenever people interacted with them, perceived, remembered and even forgot them, and that places were as significant a component of cult practices and social identities as the material objects used to define, mark and locate such beliefs and activities, be it by visible or invisible traces.

Places as such cannot be pushed in the background.

Appendix 1. Venetic site database – sites mentioned in the main thesis text

Numbered South-North throughout the region

1) Lova di Campagnalupia (Venezia)

WATER, LAGOON, liminal

Quality of evidence: good

Rural, urban or suburban: Isolated rural stipe, monumentalised from the onset. Lagoon setting

Chronology: quite late, Romanisation (2nd BC) - Roman period.

Setting: on a plain near the mouth of river Brenta and close to the Cornio stream.

Votives: votive discs, bronzetti, 1 anatomical (leg shaped) ex-voto, a scatter of laminae, burnt animals bones and mollusc shells.

Cult keywords: river mouth, lagoon, liminal place

Venetic cults: liminality, water and healing.

Cults in the Roman period: unknown, but temple complex was *deliberately* dismantled in the 1st AD.

Monumentalisation?: Yes, from the outset

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes

Bibliography: Bianchini, S. 1996, "Nuovi ritrovamenti a Lova di Campagna Lupia (VE)," in *Protostoria e storia del Venetorum Angulus: Atti del XX convegno di studi Etruschi ed Italici*, Portogruaro, pp. 371-375

Bonomi, S. 2001, "Il santuario di Lova di Campagna Lupia," in *Orizzonti del sacro: culti e santuari antichi in Altino e nel Veneto preromano*, M. Tirelli & G. Cresci Marrone, eds., Quasar, Rome, pp. 245-254

2) Morluno (Este), liminal

LIMINALITY, FERTILITY

Rural, urban or suburban? Rural suburban location.

Chronology: unknown

Setting: no precise location.

Votives: few votives (anatomical ex-votos, mostly genitalia).

Venetic cults: fertility cult. Unnamed deity.

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes

Bibliography: Prosdociimi, A. 1889, "Di due tombe euganee scoperte nel predio "le Boldue" nella necropoli di Morluno" in *Notizie degli scavi di antichità* 1889: 141-145

Maggiani, A. 2002, "Luoghi di culto e divinità ad Este," in Ruta Serafini, A. 2002 (ed.) *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, Treviso: Canova, 77-85

Gambacurta, G. 2002, "Un santuario Sud-occidentale?," in Ruta Serafini, A. 2002 (ed.), *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari.*, Treviso: Canova, 270-275

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

3) Baratella (Este)

WRITING, WATER, ACCESS TO THE CITY

Quality of evidence: good

Rural, urban or suburban? Major suburban shrine near river Adige.

Chronology: 5th BC- 3rd AD ?

Setting: river bank, SE of settlement site.

Votives: bronzetti, laminae, alphabetic tablets, styli, miniature vessels, ornaments.

Cult keywords: river, settlement, literacy

Venetic cults: existence of a cult of Reitia, Pora and Sainate (three distinct deities controlling different aspects and 'fields of expertise').

Cults in the Roman period: Minerva and Vesta.

Monumentalisation?: Yes, in the 1st- 2nd centuries AD

Feasibility of phenomenological study: likely

Bibliography: Prosdocimi, A. 1888, "Este. Nuove scoperte di antichità nel fondo Baratela, in *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, August 1888: 484-486

Prosdocimi, A. 1890, "Nuove scoperte di antichità nella Chiusura Baratela", in *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, 1890: 192-203

Chieco Bianchi, A. M. 1996, "I bronzetti figurati del santuario di Reitia ad Este," in *Protostoria e storia del Venetorum Angulus. Atti del XX convegno di studi Etruschi ed Italici, Portogruaro, Quarto d'Altino, Este ed Adria 1996*, A. M. Chieco Bianchi (ed.), pp. 377-389

Dämmer, H. W. 2002b, "Il santuario sud-orientale. Nuove indagini?," in *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, A. Ruta Serafini, ed., Canova, Treviso

Maggiani, A. 2002, "Luoghi di culto e divinità ad Este," in Ruta Serafini, A. 2002 (ed.) *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, Treviso: Canova, 77-85

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

4) Borgo Canevedo (Este)

SETTLEMENT

Quality of evidence: poor

Setting: Plain, SE of Este

Chronology: 6th- 5th centuries BC

Feasibility of phenomenology: unknown.

Bibliography: Balista, C. and Rinaldi, L. 2002, "Gli antichi percorsi dell'Adige a Este" in Ruta Serafini, A. 2002 (ed.), *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, Treviso: Canova: 17-35

5) Casale- Scolo di Lozzo (Este),

Quality of evidence: poor

Rural, urban or suburban? Late suburban stipe, Active in the Roman period, but 3 Venetic objects were found. Earlier cult?

Chronology: 7th- 6th BC- 2nd AD?

Setting: near the river (a branch of the Adige), near settlement.

Votives: one inscribed bronze kantharos, 1 decorated lamina, and 1 warrior bronzetto. Votives included the famous Lozzo kantharos bearing the earliest Venetic inscription, fishing hooks, scalpels and laminae (medicine, fishing=water).

Venetic cults: cult of Alkomno (Venetic dual) = Northern Alces= Greek Dioscuri?

Cults in the Roman period: unknown.

Monumentalisation?: Alleged temple of the Dioscuri in the area

Feasibility of phenomenology: unknown.

Bibliography: Baggio Bernardoni, E. 2002, "Un santuario occidentale? Un problema aperto," in Ruta Serafini, A. 2002 (ed.), *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, Treviso: Canova: 276-280

6) Meggiaro (Este) liminal (rites of passage)

Quality of evidence: very good

Rural, urban or suburban? Suburban stipe. Highly organised.

Chronology: 5th- 3rd BC.

Setting: on a plain, E of settlement.

Votives: laminae, one inscribed, bronzetti, animal bones including a great amount of pregnant sows and piglets.

Cult keywords: Male elite, fertility, propitiatory rituals

Venetic cults: Heno[...]toi. Male initiation rites-celebration of adulthood, of the young male members of Atestine aristocracy? Also, fertility cult.

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?: No

Feasibility of phenomenology: not likely.

Bibliography: Balista, C., Sainati, C., & Salerno, R. 2002, "I. La nuova scoperta. Il santuario orientale a Meggiaro," in Ruta Serafini, A. 2002 (ed.), *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, Treviso: Canova: 127-141

Balista, C. and Rinaldi, L. 2002, "Gli antichi percorsi dell'Adige a Este" in Ruta Serafini, A. 2002 (ed.), *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, Treviso: Canova: 17-35

Maggiani, A. 2002, "Luoghi di culto e divinità ad Este," in Ruta Serafini, A. 2002 (ed.) *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, Treviso: Canova, 77-85

Ruta Serafini, A. & Sainati, C. 2002, "Il "caso" Meggiaro: problemi e prospettive," in Ruta Serafini, A. 2002 (ed.), *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, Treviso: Canova, 216-223

Ruta Serafini, A. 2003b, "Este (PD): santuario o *auguraculum*?" in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*, Treviso: Canova, 76-77

7) Caldevigo (Este), Colle del Principe

PROMINENT PLACE

Quality of evidence: poor

Rural, urban or suburban? Suburban shrine, North of Este.

Chronology: 5th BC- 3rd BC

Setting: on a plain, N of settlement site.

Votives: bronzetti, laminae. Decorated laminae made up the most abundant votive category, as they are circa 150.

Venetic cults: cult of god *Einaio*:- he was perhaps a protector of rites of passage and young adults.

Cults in the Roman period: unknown

Monumentalisation?: No

Feasibility of phenomenology: likely.

Bibliography: Callegari, A. 1938, "Scoperta di una stipe votiva a Caldevigo sul Colle del Principe" in *Notizie Scavi* 1938: 227 ff.

Gambacurta, G. & Zaghetto, L. 2002, "Il santuario settentrionale," in Ruta Serafini, A. 2002 (ed.), *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*. Treviso: Canova, 283-295
Maggiani, A. 2002, "Luoghi di culto e divinità ad Este," in Ruta Serafini, A. 2002 (ed.) *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, Treviso: Canova, 77-85
Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

8) Este Benvenuti

PROMINENT LOCATION

Quality of evidence: Sufficient

Topographical setting: 6th century cemetery North of Este

Chronology: 6th- 5th

Feasibility of phenomenology: likely.

Bibliography:

Locatelli, D. 2003a, "Un artigianato di prestigio alle piccole corti dei nobili. I primi prodotti dell'arte delle situle," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*. Treviso: Canova, 53-54

Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli* Treviso: Canova

Prodocimi, A. 1882a "Le necropoli euganee atestine", in *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, 1882: 5-37

Capuis, L. and Chieco Bianchi, A. 2006, *Este II*. (especially pages 25-26 and 43 ff.)

9) Abano Terme

EN ROUTE - REGIONAL

Quality of evidence: Very poor

Topographic setting: En Route location, by river

Chronology: Late 4th - 3rd centuries BC

Votives: 10 miniature vessels and 15 sherds.

Venetian cults: unknown.

Cults in Roman period: none

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenological study: unknown.

Bibliography: Dämmer, H. W. 1986, "San Pietro Montagnon. Un santuario protostorico lacustre nel Veneto", Mainz am Rhein 1986

Dammer, H. W. 2002a, "Il santuario lacustre di San Pietro Montagnon: quesiti irrisolti," in *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, A. Ruta Serafini, ed., Canova, Treviso, pp. 299-305

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

10) Montegrotto Terme

EN ROUTE, WATER, liminal

Quality of evidence: very good

Rural, urban or suburban? Large rural sanctuary.

Chronology: 8th BC- 4th AD?

Setting: on an ancient thermal lake shore.

Votives: It yielded more than 10,000 votives between laminae, bronzetti, miniature and actual drinking vessels, etc.

Cult keywords: Water, libations, healing, fertility, status (horses).

Venetian cults: healing cult (mainly). Cult of *Hevissos* (one inscription)?

Cults in the Roman period: a cult of Aponus (water-fertility god)?

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Bibliography: Dämmer, H. W. 1986, "San Pietro Montagnon. Un santuario protostorico lacustre nel Veneto", Mainz am Rhein 1986

Dämmer, H. W. 2002a, "Il santuario lacustre di San Pietro Montagnon: quesiti irrisolti," in *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, A. Ruta Serafini, ed., Canova, Treviso, pp. 299-305

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

11) Ex-Pilsen Stipe A, Padua - Piazza Insurrezione

DOMESTIC

Quality of evidence:

Rural, urban or suburban: Urban domestic stipe in settlement context.

Chronology: 5th or 4th BC

Setting: within settlement area.

Votives: 1 lamina disc, 25 miniature vessels, 5 hearth tools, 1 vessel, 1 metal utensil.

Venetian cults: unknown.

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: not likely.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Gamba, M. 2003, "Le stipi votive di Padova," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*. Treviso: canova, 90-92

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

12) Ex-Pilsen Stipe B, Padua

DOMESTIC

Quality of evidence: good

Rural, urban or suburban: Urban domestic stipe.

Chronology: 5th – 4th BC

Setting: within settlement area.

Votives: 5 miniature vessels.

Venetian cults: unknown.

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: no.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Gamba, M. 2003, "Le stipi votive di Padova," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*. Treviso: canova, 90-92

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

13) Piazza Castello, Padua

DOMESTIC

Rural, urban or suburban? Urban stipe.

Chronology: 6th – 5th BC

Setting: within settlement area.

Venetic cults: unknown.

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: no.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Gamba, M. 2003, "Le stipi votive di Padova," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*. Treviso: canova, 90-92

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

14) Piazza Cavour, Padua

DOMESTIC

Rural, urban or suburban? Urban stipe.

Chronology: uncertain

Setting: within settlement area.

Venetic cults: unknown.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: no.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Gamba, M. 2003, "Le stipi votive di Padova," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*. Treviso: canova, 90-92

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

15) Piazza Garibaldi, Padua

Rural, urban or suburban? Urban stipe.

Chronology: 3rd- 4th Atestine period??

Setting: within the settlement area

Votives: a scatter of model miniature pots and 3 life-size cups

Venetic cults: unknown.

Cults in the Roman period: as above.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: no.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Gamba, M. 2003, "Le stipi votive di Padova," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*. Treviso: canova, 90-92

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

16) Via Rialto, Padua

DOMESTIC

Rural, urban or suburban? Urban stipe of domestic type.

Chronology: 5th -4th BC

Setting: within settlement area. Near modern Chiesa dei Servi.

Votives: a decorated lamina, a bronze lamina disc and 18 miniature vessels.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: no.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Gamba, M. 2003, "Le stipi votive di Padova," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*. Treviso: canova, 90-92

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

17) Via Cesare Battisti, Padua

DOMESTIC

Rural, urban or suburban? Urban stipe under excavation.

Chronology: early 4th BC.

Setting: within settlement area.

Votives: small deposit, miniature vessels, etc.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: no.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Gamba, M. 2003, "Le stipi votive di Padova," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*. Treviso: canova, 90-92

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

18) Pozzo Dipinto, Padua

WATER, SETTLEMENT

Rural, urban or suburban? This was yet another suburban stipe yielding various bronzetti.

Chronology: 4th BC- Roman period, intermittent use.

Setting: within settlement area, in relation to the river Brenta.

Votives: 4 bronzetti and one fibula of Venetic age. 3 anatomical votives (genitalia) (Roman)

Venetic cults: no idea as to nature of the cult, especially as we do not find any tell-tale indicators of domestic cults (i.e. hearth implements, vessels, etc.).

Cults in the Roman period: as above.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: no.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Gamba, M. 2003, "Le stipi votive di Padova," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*. Treviso: canova, 90-92

Maloli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

19) San Daniele, Padua

WATER, liminal

Rural, urban or suburban? Urban stipe..

Chronology: end of 5th - 4th BC.

Setting: within the settled area, by a segment of the Brenta.

Venetic cults: water cult

Votives: it yielded quite a few bronzetti and some 31 miniature clay vessels.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Gamba, M. 2003, "Le stipi votive di Padova," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*. Treviso: canova, 90-92

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Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

20) Altichiero sul Brenta (Padua)

SUBURBAN, WATER, liminal

Quality of evidence: in situ but no primary context

Rural, urban or suburban: Suburban, at 20 km NW of Padua.

Chronology: 6th BC- 4th AD

Setting: at the bottom of a section of the Brenta river in Ca' Vitiello

Votives: 180 objects between fibulae, bronzetti and coins.

Venetic cults: Unknown

Cult keywords: river

Cults in Roman period: unknown

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: likely.

Bibliography: Leonardi, G.. 1993, (ed.) "Un complesso votivo a Nord di Padova", *Quaderni di Archeologia del Veneto*, vol. 9, pp. 130-147

Zaghetto, L. and Zambotto, G. 2005, "Il deposito votivo di Altichiero a Padova (fiume Brenta)" in Gorini, G. and Mastrocinque, A. 2005 (eds.), *Stipi votive delle Venezie. Altichiero, Monte Altare, Musile, Garda, Riva*. Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider, 42-101

21) Mortise (Padua)

RURAL

Rural, urban or suburban? An isolated rural stipe.

Chronology: 5th- 4th BC.

Setting: on a plain.

Votives: 3 warrior bronzetti and 5 horseback warriors. Recovered in the late 1870s by amateurs.

Venetic cults: unknown

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: likely.

Bibliography: Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore
Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

22) Mandriola (Padua)

Rural, urban or suburban? Isolated rural stipe.

Chronology: 5th – 4th BC

Setting: on a plain.

Votives: 2 warrior bronzetti, 1 horse bronzetto

Venetic cults: unknown.

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?:No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: unknown, but likely.

Bibliography: Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore
Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

23) Bertipaglia (Padua)

Quality of evidence: very poor

Rural, urban or suburban? Minor rural stipe outside Padua.

Chronology: 5th- 4th BC

Setting: on a plain.

Votives: it yielded 3 warrior bronzetti.

Cult keywords:

Venetic cults: unknown.

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?: No

Feasibility of phenomenology: unknown.

Bibliography: Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

24) Camin (Padua)

Quality of evidence: Poor

Rural, urban or suburban? Rural stipe

Chronology: 4th – 3rd BC

Setting: marshy woodland.

Votives: 4 warrior bronzetti.

Venetic cults: unknown.

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?: No

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Bibliography: Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

25) Musile di Piave (Trevigiano) liminal= lagoon

Rural, urban or suburban? Rural.

Chronology: 4th -1st BC

Setting: location unknown. On the lagoon

Votives: the famous votive discs.

Venetic cults: 'potnia theron', lady of the animals?

Cults in the Roman period: unknown

Monumentalisation?: No

Feasibility of phenomenology: not likely.

Bibliography: Croce Da Villa, P. 1996 in 2 e. S. p. i. B. A. A. A. e. A. d. F. V. G. Soprintendenza Archeologica del Veneto (ed.), *Protostoria tra Sile e Tagliamento. Antiche genti tra Veneto e Friuli*, vol. Pordenone: Esedra Editrice

Croce Da Villa, P. 1999, "La romanizzazione lungo la via Annia tra Altino e Concordia," in *Vigilia di romanizzazione. Altino e il Veneto orientale tra II e I secolo a.C.*, M. Tirelli & G. Cresci Marrone, eds., Quasar, Rome, pp. 211-228

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

26) Altino, La Fornace (Venetian lagoon) liminal

Quality of evidence: excellent

Rural, urban or suburban: Emporic Suburban shrine SE of the main settlement area.

Chronology: 11th or 10th centuries BC ? -Iron Age- Roman- Late Antiquity

Setting: by the Santa Maria canal in the Northern lagoon.

Votives: bronzetti (horse, warriors, imported), horse skulls and jaws (ritual sacrifice of horses, a one-off in Venetic cults), laminae, aquatic animal bones, mollusc shells.

Venetic cults: the god Altno?

Cult keywords: ancestral, lagoon, liminal place, strategic place, commerce, status

Cults in the Roman period: Jupiter.

Monumentalisation?: Yes, from the Late Bronze Age/EIA

Feasibility of phenomenological study: yes.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1999, "Gli aspetti del culto: tra continuità e trasformazione," in *Vigilia di romanizzazione. Altino e Veneto Orientale tra II e I secolo Avanti Cristo. Atti del Convegno a Venezia, San Sebastiano nel Giugno 1997*, vol. 11 M. Tirelli & G. Cresci Marrone, eds., Quasar, Rome, pp. 153-170
Capuis, L. 2004, "The Etruscans and the Veneti" in Camporeale, G. 2005 (ed.), *The Etruscans outside Etruria*, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles: 130-145
Croce Da Villa, P. 1999, "La romanizzazione lungo la via Annia tra Altino e Concordia," in *Vigilia di romanizzazione. Altino e il Veneto orientale tra II e I secolo a.C.*, M. Tirelli & G. Cresci Marrone, eds., Quasar, Rome, pp. 211-228
Marinetti, A. 2001a, "Testimonianze di culto da Altino preromana nel quadro dei confronti con il mondo Veneto: i dati delle iscrizioni," in Tirelli, M. & Cresci Marrone, G. 2001 (eds.), *Orizzonti del sacro: culti e santuari antichi in Altino e nel Veneto preromano*. Rome: Quasar, 97-120
Scarfì, B. M. & Tombolani, M. 1987, *Altino preromana e Romana*. Quarto d'Altino (VE): Tipolitografia Adriatica
Tirelli, M. & Cresci Marrone, G. 1999, "Orizzonti del sacro: culti e santuari antichi in Altino e nel Veneto Orientale. Atti del congresso, Venezia 1-2 dicembre 1999", M. Tirelli & G. Cresci Marrone, eds., Quasar, Rome
Tirelli, M. & Cipriano, S. 2001, "Il santuario altinate in località "Fornace"," in *Orizzonti del sacro: culti e santuari antichi in Altino e nel Veneto preromano*, M. Tirelli & G. Cresci Marrone, eds., Quasar, Rome, pp. 37-60
Tirelli, M. 2002, "Il santuario di Altino: Altino- e i cavalli", In Ruta Serafini, A. 2003 (ed.) *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, Treviso: Canova, 311-318
Tirelli 2003a, "Altino (VE): il santuario per gli *Emporoi*," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*, Treviso: Canova, pp.78-79
Tirelli, M. 2003b, "Altino (VE): la romanizzazione," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*, Treviso: Canova, pp. 97-98

27) Altino, Canevere (Venetian lagoon)

Quality of evidence: poor. Liminal setting

Rural, urban or suburban: Suburban stipe to the North of the main settlement area.

Chronology: 5th- 4th BC

Setting: by the course of the river Zero

Votives: 3 architectural fragments, probably pertaining to an altar(s), 2 of which bear Venetic inscriptions

Venetic cults: God Belatukadro? Belenus?

Cults in Roman period: none

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Monumentalisation?: Yes.

Bibliography: Scarfì, B. M. & Tombolani, M. 1987, *Altino preromana e Romana*. Quarto d'Altino (VE): Tipolitografia Adriatica
Tirelli, M. & Cresci Marrone, G. 1999, "Orizzonti del sacro: culti e santuari antichi in Altino e nel Veneto Orientale. Atti del congresso, Venezia 1-2 dicembre 1999", M. Tirelli & G. Cresci Marrone, eds., Quasar, Rome
Tirelli, M. 2003b, "Altino (VE): la romanizzazione," in Malnati, L. & Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*, Treviso: Canova, pp. 97-98

28) Asolo (Trevigiano)

EN ROUTE

Quality of evidence: very poor

Rural, urban or suburban? Unknown.

Chronology: ?

Setting: unknown

Votives: resting warrior bronzetti, of the Piave valley type and a few sortes inscribed in the Venetic script dating to the 2nd c. BC- 1st BC (Gambacurta 2005, "Sortes" page 136)

Cult keywords: status

Venetic cults: male protector god?

Cults in the Roman period: unknown

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes, but location is uncertain.

Bibliography: Gambacurta 1996 (447)

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

29) Montebelluna, Via Cima Mandria

Cemetery

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1998, "Per una rilettura dell' iconografia/ iconologia dei dischi" in Gambacurta and Capuis 1998, "Contributi: dai dischi di Montebelluna ai dischi di Ponzano", *Quaderni Di Archeologia del Veneto* 14, 1998

Manessi, P. 2003, "Storia dei rinvenimenti precedenti alle campagne di scavo" in *Archaologia, Quaderni del Museo di Storia Naturale e Archeologia di Montebelluna*, issue 1 2003: 17-21

Manessi, P. and Nascimbene, A. 2003a, "Posmon. Scavi 1962, 1963, 1964, 1969" in *Archaologia, Quaderni del Museo di Storia Naturale e Archeologia di Montebelluna*, issue 1 2003: 27-32

Manessi, P. and Nascimbene, A. 2003b, " Inquadramento cronologico-culturale" in *Archaologia, Quaderni del Museo di Storia Naturale e Archeologia di Montebelluna*, issue 1 2003: 45-50

30) Fossalta di Portogruaro (Venetian hinterland)

Quality of evidence: poor

Rural, urban or suburban: Rural.

Chronology: 5th BC

Setting: The lagoon

Votives: One warrior bronzetto and one votive spade (paletta)

Venetic cults: unknown.

Cults in the Roman period: 3 wells one of which contained votive offerings (Roman period). Later *villa rustica* in situ.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: unknown.

Bibliography: Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

31) Vicenza, Piazzetta San Giacomo

Rural, urban or suburban? Urban stipe.

Chronology: 6th - 5th BC

Setting: near the river Retrone

Votives: inscribed laminae with processions.

Venetic cults: possibly a water cult? Also, a communal cult= institutional? Cult typology is closer to Atestine and Paduan models than Eastern Veneto.

Cult keywords: community, river

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: unknown

Bibliography: Gambacurta, G. 1999a, "Acqua, città e luoghi di culto nel Veneto preromano", *Ocnus*, vol. 7, pp. 179-186

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

Zaghetto, L. 2002b, "Il santuario di Vicenza," in Ruta Serafini 2002, (ed.), *Este preromana: una città e i suoi santuari*, Treviso: Canova, pp. 306-310

32) Magrè (Vicentino) POLITICAL - BOUNDARY

Quality of evidence: poor

Rural, urban or suburban: Venetic stipe in the Alto Vicentino.

Chronology: 5th-2nd centuries BC.

Setting: on an isolated hilltop in the piedmont (Monte Castello).

Votives: inscribed antlers bearing numerals (sortes), laminae.

Venetic cults: Rit-, Reit-.

Cults in the Roman period: No.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Fogolari, G. and Prosdocimi, A. L. 1988 (eds.) *I Veneti antichi: lingua e cultura*. Padua

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

33) Santorso (Vicentino)

Rural, urban or suburban? Rural.

Chronology: 3rd- 2nd BC?

Setting: unknown.

Votives: bone and antler sortes.

Venetic/Raetic cults: oracle?

Cults in the Roman period: unknown.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: unknown.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Fogolari, G. and Prosdocimi, A. L. 1988 (eds.) *I Veneti antichi: lingua e cultura*. Padua

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

34) Bocca Lorenza (cave of), near Santorso, VI

PROMINENT PLACE, CAVE, liminal

Quality of evidence: surface finds in antiquity and 1960s excavations.

Rural, urban or suburban? A cave on a hillside.

Chronology: 5th BC-15th century AD

Setting: on the S slope of Monte Summano, at 387 m a.s.l.

Cult keywords: peak, cave, high place, water

Venetic cults: A cult place in the location of earlier dwellings (Neolithic): miniature drinking vessels and one or two fragments of inscribed antlers..

Cults in the Roman period: Unknown: antler pins.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenological study: likely.

Bibliography: Barfield, L. and Broglio, A. 1966, "Materiali per lo studio del Neolitico nel territorio Vicentino", *Bullettino di Paleoetnologia Italiana* 75: 51-95

Comune di Santorso, Provincia di Vicenza, "La grotta di Bocca Lorenza". Santorso:Santorso Archeologica

Fogolari, G. and Prosdocimi, A. L. 1988 (eds.) *I Veneti antichi: lingua e cultura*. Padua

35) Trissino (Vicentino)

Rural, urban or suburban? Rural Raetic stipe

Chronology: 3rd BC?

Setting: hill top

Votives: 4 antler fragments in the form of sortes, 32 antler tablets, only four of which inscribed. (Gambacurta and Gorini 2005, 135)

Venetic cults: oracle?

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: not likely.

Bibliography: Capuis, L. 1993, *I Veneti: società e cultura di un popolo dell'età Preromana* Longanesi, Milan

Fogolari, G. and Prosdocimi, A. L. 1988 (eds.) *I Veneti antichi: lingua e cultura*. Padua

Maioli, M. G. & Mastrocinque, A. 1992, *La stipe di Villa di Villa e i culti degli antichi Veneti (con un contributo di Giovanni Leonardi)* Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore

Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo

36) Castello Roganzuolo (Trevigiano)

PROMINENT PLACE (Mt Castellar) en route - transhumance

Rural, urban or suburban? Rural votive deposit.

Chronology: 5th-4th BC

Setting: on a hill top and slopes in open countryside.

Votives: bronzetti and laminae of Monte Altare type.

Cult keywords:**Venetic cults:** rural god-warfare god?**Cults in the Roman period:** unknown.**Monumentalisation?:** No.**Feasibility** of phenomenology: yes.**Bibliography:** Arnosti, G. 1993, "Reperti votivi e santuari dei Paleooveneti nell'alto Cenedese", *Il Flaminio- - Rivista di Studi Storico-Archeologici della Civiltà' Montana delle Prealpi Trevigiane*. no. 6, pp. 55-82Arnosti, G. 1996a, "Per Cenetam gradiens. Appunti sulle vie della romanizzazione con riferimento all'antico Cenedese", *Il Flaminio- Rivista di Studi Storico-Archeologici della Civiltà' Montana delle Prealpi Trevigiane*. no. 9, pp. 59-105

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37) Presette - Prà di Stalla di Orsago (Trevigiano)**Quality of evidence:** very poor**Rural, urban or suburban?** Rural**Chronology:** 5th BC?**Setting:** open countryside, a few kilometres from Villa di Villa**Votives:** a scatter of decorated laminae with cattle motifs and a central human figure, very similar to those from Villa di Villa. NO crenellated laminae, due to lack of nearby hills.**Cult keywords:** fertility**Venetic cults:** male pastoral god?**Cults in the Roman period:** probably none.**Monumentalisation?:** NO.**Feasibility** of phenomenology: very likely.**Bibliography:** Arnosti, G. 1993, "Reperti votivi e santuari dei Paleooveneti nell'alto Cenedese", *Il Flaminio- - Rivista di Studi Storico-Archeologici della Civiltà' Montana delle Prealpi Trevigiane*. no. 6, pp. 55-82Arnosti, G. 1996a, "Per Cenetam gradiens. Appunti sulle vie della romanizzazione con riferimento all'antico Cenedese", *Il Flaminio- Rivista di Studi Storico-Archeologici della Civiltà' Montana delle Prealpi Trevigiane*. no. 9, pp. 59-105

De Nardi, S. 2007 "Prehistoric landscapes of the Veneto: a plurality of local identities reflected in cult and landscape perception" in PIA, Papers from the Institute of Archaeology (issue 18)

38) Montereale Valcellina (Pordenone)**Rural, urban or suburban?** Rural.**Chronology:** Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age.**Setting:** a river on a plain.**Votives:** depositions of weapons.**Venetic cults:** a river god/water deity.

Cults in the Roman period: there was a temple nearby, and an arula (portable altar) was found on river bank bearing a Latin inscription to the god Timavo (a late version on the early water cult?).

Monumentalisation?: Yes.

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Bibliography: Bandelli, G. and Fontana, F. 2001 (eds.), *Iulium Carnicum: centro alpino tra Italia e Norico dalla protostoria all'età imperiale*. Edizioni Quasar

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Malnati, L. 1996, "Gli Antichi Veneti Orientali: il punto sulla situazione archaeologica," in e. S. p. i. B. A. A. A. e. A. d. F. V. G. Soprintendenza Archeologica del Veneto (ed.), *La protostoria tra Sile e Tagliamento. Antiche genti tra Veneto e Friuli.*, vol. 2, Pordenone: Esedra Editrice, pp. 3-10

39) Scomigo (Trevigiano)

Rural, urban or suburban? Isolated rural deposit

Chronology: 6th-5th BC

Setting: Countryside near Villa di Villa

Votives: bronzetti and laminae – unpublished

Monumentalisation?: No.

Cult keywords: Villa di Villa

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Bibliography: Arnosti, G. 1993, "Reperti votivi e santuari dei Paleoveneti nell'alto Cenedese", *Il Flaminio- - Rivista di Studi Storico-Archeologici della Civiltà Montana delle Prealpi Trevigiane*. no. 6, pp. 55-82

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40) Monte Altare (Vittorio Veneto, Trevigiano)

PROMINENT PLACE, WATER, EN ROUTE, liminal

Rural, urban or suburban? Rural stipe, location unknown, but yielding many votives.

Chronology: 6th BC- 4th AD

Setting: hilltop- slopes

Votives: 35 laminae, 20 bronzetti, 50 odd sortes, La Tène, Venetic and Roman coins.

Cult keywords: prominent place, (caves), (springs)

Venetic cults: deity living on the hill top; prominence, landmark, fertility.

Cults in the Roman period: oracle (sortes)?

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Bibliography: Arnosti, G. 1993, "Reperti votivi e santuari dei Paleoveneti nell'alto Cenedese", *Il Flaminio- - Rivista di Studi Storico-Archeologici della Civiltà Montana delle Prealpi Trevigiane*. no. 6, pp. 55-82

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41) Monte Plai (Trevigiano)

PROMINENT PLACE

Ambiguous site.

Bibliography: Arnosti, G. 1993, "Reperti votivi e santuari dei Paleoveneti nell'alto Cenedese", *Il Flaminio- - Rivista di Studi Storico-Archeologici della Civiltà Montana delle Prealpi Trevigiane*. no. 6, pp. 55-82

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De Nardi, S. 2007 "Prehistoric landscapes of the Veneto: a plurality of local identities reflected in cult and landscape perception" in PIA, Papers from the Institute of Archaeology (issue 18)

42) Villa di Villa di Cordignano (Trevigiano)

POLITICAL - AGRICULTURAL – PROMINENT PLACE - liminal

Quality of evidence: good

Rural, urban or suburban? Rural, unknown primary location. Likely that it was located on the slopes rather than on hill top itself [Col Castelir].

Chronology: 4th BC- 4th AD.

Setting: hill- slopes.

Votives: It yielded numerous votives and animal bones, albeit out of context. One inscription to *Vesuta* on a lamina.

Venetic cults: *Vesuta*? And rural-fertility-warfare god? The presence of a cave network inside the hill in antiquity would have made the location even more special. Now the caves are lost owing to modern quarries. Animal sacrifice.

Cult keywords: fertility, prominent place, caves.

Cults in the Roman period: *Vetusa*?

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Bibliography: Arnosti, G. 1993, "Reperti votivi e santuari dei Paleooveneti nell'alto Cenedese", *Il Flaminio- Rivista di Studi Storico-Archeologici della Civiltà Montana delle Prealpi Trevigiane*. no. 6, pp. 55-82

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43) Monte Dolada (Alpago)

CEMETERY ON PIAN DE LA GNELA at 720 odd m a.s.l

Iron Age burials of different ranks, 100 metres from a Roman cemetery (Necropoli Dolada).

Unpublished.

44) Vallesella di Domegge (Cadore, Belluno) POLITICAL

Rural, urban or suburban? This is a little known, isolated rural stipe.

Chronology: probably 4th BC.

Setting: sub-alpine, in the mountains.

Votives: weapon offerings, many of which display La Tène characteristics.

Star find was an 'Alpine style' helmet.

(Gambacurta 2003, 83, 'Il *Venetorum Angulus* e la pressione celtica': passing mention).

I need to find out where it is.

Venetic cults: unknown.

Cults in the Roman period: probably none.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Bibliography: Bonomi, S. and Ruta Serafini, A. 1994, "Una 'chiave di Penelope' dal territorio Bellunese" in *Quaderni di Archeologia del Veneto*, 10: 11-13

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Pascucci, P. 1990, *I depositi votivi Paleoveneti. Per un'archeologia del culto*. Padova: Zielo
Pellegrini, G.B. 1984, "La provincia di Belluno in epoca romana e preromana" in *Fondazione Crocerossina Marialaura Bocchetti Proti*, Belluno

45) Lagole di Calalzo di Cadore (Cadore)

EN ROUTE - POLITICAL - WATER - liminal

Quality of evidence: poor

Rural, urban or suburban: This was a major non-urban stipe, along ancient communication routes.

Chronology: 4th BC- 4th AD

Setting: sub-alpine milieu. Cold springs, hot springs, waterfalls, thermal lake.

Votives: it yielded numerous votives, including ladle handles, square laminae, bronzetti, weapons and many animal bones.

Community offerings= public cult?

Cult keywords: Water, springs, liminal location

Venetic cults: Trumusiate, Tribusiat. Healing and animal sacrifice

Cults in Roman period: Apollo (healing).

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Bibliography: De Lotto, E. 1961 (2002), *Una divinità sanante a Lagole (Calalzo di Cadore) nel 3° secolo a.C.* Belluno: Tipografia Benetta. Ristampa Grafiche Longaronesi, 2002

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46) Trichiana, Monte Nenz (Cadore)

POLITICAL – EN ROUTE – liminal

Rural, urban or suburban? An isolated votive deposit on Monte Nenz.

Chronology: 7th- 5th BC?

Setting: in a rural sub-alpine context on a hill.

Votives: unknown amount of objects found in a pit containing one outstanding votive, a large decorated bronze key manufactured in the Hallstatt area. [Symbolism of keys in ancient religion.]

Stipe was discovered in 1994. Still unpublished.

Venetic cults?:

Cult keywords: Key for the underworld/divination?

Cults in the Roman period: none.

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: likely.

Bibliography: Bonomi, S. and Ruta Serafini, A. 1994, "Una 'chiave di Penelope' dal territorio Bellunese" in *Quaderni di Archeologia del Veneto*, 10: 11-13

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47) Monte Calvario di Auronzo di Cadore (Cadore)

Rural, urban or suburban? Rural.

Chronology: 2nd BC- Late Imperial period.

Setting: Alpine region, on a mountain slope (Monte Calvario is 930 metres a.s.l.).

Votives: various square laminae and fragments (of which 2 bearing a Venetic inscription), 2 decorated bronze discs [one Roman depicting Bacchus], inscribed simpula, animal bones, La Tène and Roman coins.

Cult keywords: fertility, water, wine libations

Venetic cults: ?

Cults in the Roman period: Dionysus, wine.

Monumentalisation?: Yes

Feasibility of phenomenology: yes.

Bibliography: De Nardi, S. 2007 "Prehistoric landscapes of the Veneto: a plurality of local identities reflected in cult and landscape perception" in PIA, Papers from the Institute of Archaeology (issue 18)
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48) Valle di Cadore (Cadore)

Rural, urban or suburban? Rural

Chronology: uncertain

Setting: mountainous landscape

Votives: one inscribed situla bearing the dative *Louderai Kanei*

Venetic cults: a female deity or deities, Loudera-? And Kane-?

Cults in the Roman period: probably none

Monumentalisation?: No.

Feasibility of phenomenology: unknown.

Bibliography: Bonomi, S. and Ruta Serafini, A. 1994, "Una 'chiave di Penelope' dal territorio Bellunese" in *Quaderni di Archeologia del Veneto*, 10: 11-13

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49) Mel di Cadore- settlement (Cadore)

Still unpublished

50) Mel di Cadore (cemetery)

Tomb circles (tumuli).

Bibliography: Gambacurta, G. 2003a, "I circoli di Mel (BL) e la chiave di Trichiana (BL)," in Malnati, L. and Gamba, M. 2003 (eds.), *I Veneti dai bei cavalli*. Treviso: Canova, 50-51

Appendix 2. The template site assessment form

SITE NAME and ID No.	
LOCATION	
MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES (Description)	
EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION	
DEGREE OF ISOLATION/ DIFFICULTY OF REACHING SITE	
DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS SETTLEMENT SITES in Km	
DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES in Km	
RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)	

RELEVANCE OF SEASONALITY FACTORS	
VISUAL APPEAL OF PLACE: sense of place and impressions	
INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)	
VISIBILITY FROM AND OF SITE	
INTERPRETATION	
GIS POINTS	

Morlungo fieldwork form (2)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

29-07-05. 3:45pm. Very hot, close and hazy. I spent just under an hour at this location.

SITE NAME

Este Morlungo (2)

LOCATION

Along the SS Padana Inferiore, SW of Este's modern settlement. Off modern Via Morlungo, crossed by the railway line. Location is very close to the Capodaglio cemetery (500 m ca. to the S). Location of sparse votive objects.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

Flatland consisting of ploughed fields framed by the Colli Euganei to the N-NE in the direction of Este, and skirted by private residences to the South.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

Location does not feel secluded and it's accessible from all directions. Unlikely to have been very prominent in surrounding landscape either. Relatively easy to find and access. It would not have been a "secret" location based on its topography.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends in with the flat landscape

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

3KM ca. from Casale Scolo di Lozzo.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

1.5 to 2 km SW of the original Este settlement nuclei

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

500- 600 m from Capodaglio

SEASONALITY FACTOR

Not especially relevant on a plain

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Not Applicable.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Modern constructions and the shift in river course alter the perception of place, but it would have been a flat, plain locale crossed by the Adige. It would have had its *raison d'être* in relation to the river Adige and the liminality factor given by the cemetery of Capodaglio on the other bank.

The location would have had an open, exposed feeling, an impression of exposure to the elements.

The local soundscape would have been dominated by the flowing water of the river.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Good visibility over Este and the Colli Euganei.
Location of Capodaglio hidden by modern construction.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Unknown.
It would have been almost certainly intervisible with the Capodaglio cemetery located on Via Paleoveneti.

INTERPRETATION

Liminal fertility-oriented cult place.

Meggiaro fieldwork form (6)**DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS**

29/07/05, 4pm. Hot day, sunny and dry.

SITE NAME

Este Meggiaro (6)

LOCATION

Meggiaro, Via Meggiaro, Eastern area of modern Este.
North-North-East of the ancient settlement of Este.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

Plain area framed by the distant Colli Euganei to the NW.
Nowadays heavily built up (municipal- council sports complex and swimming pool)

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

Neither. Most likely an open space and highly visible location.
It would not have been hard to locate and very straightforward to reach because on a plain.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends in to an extent.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

No nearby cult places. The nearest one would have to be Caldevigo- Colle del Principe.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

1.5 km NE of main settlement foci. Considerable distance from the main settlement nuclei marks this place as a suburban shrine.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

N/A. The Benvenuti cemetery would be NE of this locale.
Via Cappuccini, bordering Benvenuti, leads to the upper slopes and top of Colle del Principe: the ancient path. There was a strip or belt of Northern cemeteries - in relation to main settlement nuclei in Iron Age- going from the Casa di Ricovero- Via Santo Stefano to Via Meggiaro (fig. 5E.17). A ritually significant area.

SEASONALITY FACTOR

Negligible.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

N/A

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Modern buildings do impact sense of place to an extent.

The location feels open, spacious and not restricted by building, as the horizon is wide and affords a good view of the Colli Euganei.

The location would have been a semi-marshy, fluvial terracing framed by the Colli Euganei.

Soundscape: the sounds of ritual activity, possibly processions, going on within the shrine's perimeter. The sound of animals being sacrifice: the particularly loud and eerie shrieking of pigs.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Visibility from site would have been limited as it was located on low ground. Not prominent, hence probably not recognisable from a great distance.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

NA

INTERPRETATION

Possible social status/performance and sacrificial cult place.

Caldevigo fieldwork form (7)**SITE NAME**

Colle del Principe, Caldevigo (Este)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

10/03/05, 2pm, bright and sunny

LOCATION

A hill (some 100 metres a.s.l. North of Este in the Po Plain, near the Colli Euganei, but not that close to them. Above ancient and modern Este

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

Hill. Deposit found at its foot. The fact that the materials were found at its foot is somewhat played down in literature. It could have been very relevant to its significance, because unlike the other Este stipi this was likely to dominate the skyline.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

Prominent place, probably very easy to access from Iron Age Este. Prominent in the skyline and from the city.

DEGREE OF ISOLATION

Hard to tell in antiquity, but probably not isolated at all, well inserted in settlements environs

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

Nearest sacred site: Meggiaro

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES (IF APPLICABLE)

Just above Este's northern settlement nuclei, less than 1 km

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER CEMETERIES (IF APPLICABLE)

Less than 1 KM from Este Casa di Ricovero; 3 km from Este Benvenuti.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends in to an extent with the other low hills around it.

RELEVANCE OF SEASONALITY FACTOR

Negligible.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Very steep ascent from the South- Southwest, which takes approximately 10 minutes. Moderate to intense extent of tiredness upon reaching the top. The top is visible from the hill foot coming from the West and North.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is a prominent locale and the ascent is rather steep. It would not have been readily accessible by someone elderly, ill or injured, and it fits in well with the site's use as a coming-of-age sacred place due to the uphill positioning.

The top and upper slopes create a sense of elevation, but not of extreme exposure.

Soundscape: the sounds from the underlying settlement, the sound of footsteps in processions.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

It would have been seen and be seen from Meggiaro to the N-NE

VISIBILITY OF/FROM SITE

It would have dominated a great view over Este and the Euganei area. Excellent visibility, albeit covered by trees (modern).

INTERPRETATION

Prominent cult place for initiation and coming of age rituals.

Montegrotto Terme fieldwork form (10)

DATE, TIME AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

03/03/05, 1pm. Cold and overcast afternoon.

SITE NAME

Montegrotto Terme.

LOCATION

At the foot of the Colli Euganei.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

In antiquity there was a thermal lake surrounded by a plain and framed by sporadic heights of the Colli Euganei; today the location consists of ploughed fields, the cemetery, and the foot of surrounding hills and the courtyard of Hotel Terme Preistoriche. Flat landscape framed by the Colli Euganei.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

It would have been neither prominent nor secluded, and easy to reach.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

9km from Abano Terme.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES (IF APPLICABLE)

It would have probably been quite a distance from large scale settlements- Padova is 6 km to the NW, Este 15km to the South

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER CEMETERIES (IF APPLICABLE)

None in the immediate vicinity.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It would have been a lake standing out in the flat plains surroundings – if there were hills nearby, they would have stood out in the otherwise flat scenery.

RELEVANCE OF SEASONALITY FACTOR

Snowbound and possibly partly frozen in winter, and as such fascinating.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Not applicable.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Possibly very evocative location in the Iron Age, with bubbling springs. Sense of place is still alive in the pungent smell of minerals permeating the air.
Soundscape: the sound of animal slaughter, of the spring water bubbling to the surface of the lake, of prayers being uttered.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Abano Terme was the nearest cult place, but too far away to be seen from here.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Good visibility of Colli Euganei, and the local hillocks, i.e. Colle Berta, Monte Castello and Colle Montagnon.

INTERPRETATION

Sacred site dedicated to drinking and bathing in sacred water. Healing cults.

Lova di Campagnalupia fieldwork form (1)**DATE, TIME AND WEATHER CONDITIONS**

13/04/05, 3pm. Sunny and clear day.

SITE NAME

Lova di Campagnalupia.

LOCATION

In the southern Venetian lagoon, on the bank of the Cornio canal, in cultivated fields near its idrovora.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

Cornfields, a flat landscape typical of the reclaimed lagoon, with the Cornio canal, the idrovora and the nearby flyover as the main visual elements.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

It would have been neither prominent nor secluded, and easy to reach.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

No other sacred sites in the area.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES (IF APPLICABLE)

No known settlements in the area.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER CEMETERIES (IF APPLICABLE)

None in the immediate vicinity.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends in with the modern landscape of flat fields, except for its vicinity to water.

RELEVANCE OF SEASONALITY FACTOR

Negligible.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Not applicable.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The air still smells of pungent marshy water, both at the spot of the sanctuary and in the fields near the museum in Campagnalupia (see map). The lagoon is largely gone, but the sense of special positioning in a watery environment remains.

Soundscape: the stillness of the lagoon would have been filled with the sounds of activity at the site, including processions, excavation of site features and ceremonies taking place.

This cult place was a social project, demanding more than one person's work.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Not applicable.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Unknown.

INTERPRETATION

Sanctuary dedicated to territorial identity, fertility and natural concerns.

Altino La Fornace fieldwork form (26)**DATE, TIME AND WEATHER CONDITIONS**

12/03/05 11am. Bright but cold morning.

SITE NAME

Altino La Fornace.

LOCATION

In the northern Venetian lagoon. The sacred area was enclosed by canals crossing- Santa Maria and Sioncello.

The proximity to the lagoon is clear from the pungent salty smell in the air. It would have been no more than 1.5 kilometres to the South/ SE.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

A road, a network of canals and rivers (Santa Maria, Sioncello and Zero). The locale is located off the centre of a small town called Quarto d'Altino and it has the character of the countryside, but with the flat, monotonous character typical of reclaimed land.

In the past it would have been a vast landscape riddled with canals, and in the middle of the so called Cona marshes.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

Visually it would not have stood out unless there was a substantial perishable structure, but it would have been the first landmark encountered by those reaching the settlement from the Adriatic via the lagoon and the canals. Special location in a marshy flatland.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

600m S-SE of Canevere.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES (IF APPLICABLE)

Not very far, 500 m to the N-NW.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER CEMETERIES (IF APPLICABLE)

Between 700 and 900m S-SE of the Albertini and Portoni cemeteries.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends in.

RELEVANCE OF SEASONALITY FACTOR

Negligible.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (If applicable):

Not applicable.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The air smells of lagoon and marshy water, it's almost overwhelming. The smell of the sea is so strong sitting on the canal's edge (S. Maria).

Soundscape: the sounds of the boats coming in from the Adriatic, the animal sacrifices, the rituals.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (If applicable)

It could have been intervisible with Canevere. It is barely visible from La Fornace in the modern landscape though.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Visibility over the canals leading to the lagoon.

INTERPRETATION

This has turned out to be the most ancient Venetic cult place with a sequence of 'use' from the LBA, or most likely, from the Early Iron Age to the Late Antique period (6th century AD). It could have been an ancestral sacred place, predating the settlement of Altino by four centuries.

In the Iron Age, the sanctuary with an emphasis on trade, nature and the local welfare of the inhabitants of Altino. The symbolism of the isolated 'island' surrounded by canals is clear. It suggested a sense of belonging to the ancestral land and also evoked the mystic meeting of water and earth (lagoon= liminal place).

Altichiero sul Brenta fieldwork form (20)

DATE, TIME AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

28/07/05. 3pm. Hot and sunny day.

SITE NAME

Altichiero sul Brenta.

LOCATION

The place of recovery of the votive material lies to the South of the modern Comune of Vigodarzere along the banks of the river Brenta, on the Altichiero side.

I followed the indications provided in the Quaderni di Archeologia Veneta to locate the precise spot and managed to do so after asking local people where Ca' Pisani (or Villa Pisani as it turned out to be) was.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

The river and the modern raised bank, with a pathway running parallel to it and lush vegetation along its banks.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

Not prominent.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

It would have been 5km west of Mortise (21).

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES (IF APPLICABLE)

Padua 3-4 km to the south.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER CEMETERIES (IF APPLICABLE)

Unknown.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends in with the local fluvial environment, but it would have been a significant topographical landmark in the Iron Age countryside North of Padua.

RELEVANCE OF SEASONALITY FACTOR

Negligible.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Not applicable.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Visually, the locale has changed, with the banks being artificially raised.

Lower bank at water level would have enhanced the communion with water.

The sound of the flowing water could have been a part of the religious experience of being at the site. Visually this stretch of the Brenta is a very pleasant, relaxing locale, very popular with locals for outdoors activities.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Not applicable.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Visible from the road that leaves the motorway and all along the Vigodarzere bank.

Visibility from the site area would have been greater than today if vegetation cover was sparser. Visibility not paramount for site significance.

INTERPRETATION

This cult placed marked the Northern boundary of ancient Padova.

This symbolic territorial marker makes it an extra urban shrine like Baratella though.

Monte Altare fieldwork form (40)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

21/12/04. 2:30pm. Cold but sunny.

SITE NAME

Monte Altare (40)

LOCATION

Monte Altare, Vittorio Veneto (TV)

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

It is a tallish hill overlooking a hilly landscape of meadows, fields and hillocks. The hilltop (roughly 50 sq. m) is scattered with rocks and trees.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

It is prominent. It can be reached on foot on 2 sides, the South side (the older path) and Northeast (the San Lorenzo side).

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It stands out on the surrounding meadows but blends in with the nearby hills (San Rocco, San Paolo)

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

It is located around 400 m from the Bronze Age settlement nucleus of Ceneda.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

It is located 600 m from the Frati cemetery (8th century BC- 1st century BC)

SEASONALITY FACTOR

Today it is often enshrouded in mist in cold winter days and hot hazy summer days, and it would have been in antiquity as well, which affords the hill a very evocative appearance. It would have been easily accessible in all seasons via the South meadows.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

It takes about 20 minutes to climb the hill, and the climb is a bit steep in places, but overall easily negotiable for a moderately fit individual. The extent of tiredness for a young individual of average fitness level is moderate to high, depending on the weather conditions. My previous climb in the month of July was noticeably more tiring than the December climb. The peak is visible only when approaching it, due to the dense shrub cover on the upper slopes.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

On a beautifully clear day like this Monte Altare is a stunningly evocative and appealing location, so much so that photographs do not do it justice.

The sun over the top and the slopes highlights the isolation and altitude of the peak, while sunshine makes the surrounding landscape look tranquil and non-menacing.

Soundscape: the remoteness of the peak could have drowned out the sound of e.g. grazing cattle on the lower slopes.

The appending of sacred objects (perforated) to tree branches or other upright structures would have generated a pleasant jingle of bronze against bronze, especially in the breeze.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

In antiquity the hill would have been barren (see Borsato's observations above: 1986) and the hilltop would have been rocky. Tree cover is recent; therefore visibility from the hilltop would have been enhanced.

The visibility from the top today is however great, and on a clear March day I have seen as far as Venice 90 km to the South. The entire Val Lapisina leading to the Cadore is visible looking North, as well as the Eastern boundary with the Friuli.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Col Castelir is clearly visible 10km to the South-East. Castello Roganzuolo is visible to the South, and Scomigo hill is also visible looking south. Mt Piai is the most striking peak looking NW.

INTERPRETATION

Hilltop sacred in itself, not altered by means of structures. The hill would have been an easily recognizable landmark from afar, from its vicinity and it would have afforded a great view over the surrounding landscape.

Castello Roganzuolo fieldwork form (36)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

06/08/05. 11:30am. Sunny and hot day.

SITE NAME

Castello Roganzuolo (36).

LOCATION

The cemetery parking lot, surrounding vineyards and church hill. In antiquity the area would have been wooded, before agricultural works. The soil is very rocky.

The site stratigraphy was upset by the construction of the road and local buildings.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

A parking lot and fields below a hillock. Natural terracing has stayed the same since antiquity (the edge of the vineyards to the south: it could have provided containment and "isolation" from the surrounding landscape and even a defensive aid.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

The hillock would have been somewhat prominent in the surrounding flattish topography.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends in with the undulating landscape

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

It would have been 2-3 km from Scomigo and 15 km East of Monte Altare.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

The nearest visible settlement nucleus would have been on Monte Baldo to the North.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

Unknown.

SEASONALITY FACTOR

Irrelevant.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

The climb takes 2 minutes and the extent of tiredness is very low. The top is visible from the bottom of the hillock.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is a beautiful location, and the sense of peace on the hilltop is enhanced by the all-encompassing view over the valley.

Soundscape: the sounds from the valley beyond.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Visibility was impeded by heat mist, but I had a clear view of the Monte Altare and the Castelir to the East. Scomigo is not visible from the top.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

The hill is intervisible with Mt Altare and Castelir.

INTERPRETATION

The most likely sacred areas, as I think there were at least two activity areas, were a) on the top of the hillock and b) at its feet, on the natural terracing to the S. Both the terracing and the hillock were elevated in relation to the surrounding topography. Intervisibility with other local sacred heights could be a significant factor.

Col Castelir fieldwork form (42)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

16/06/03. 4pm. Sunny.

SITE NAME

Col Castelir (41)

LOCATION

In the vicinity of Cordignano, the last town in the Region Veneto to the East, bordering with Friuli.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

A hilly landscape, hardly disturbed by modern constructions, bar the electric pylons scattered on the hill slopes.

The hill is scattered with rows of rocks (*masiere*).

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

The hill is a rounded dome in an otherwise flattish countryside. It would have been located along a busy travellers route eastward into the Friuli.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends in yet stands out from the flatter areas all around.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

The nearest votive deposits would have been Presette (37) and Monte Altare (40), respectively 8 and 10.6 km.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

The hilltop had a short-lived Bronze Age habitation phase.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

Unknown

SEASONALITY FACTOR

Negligible

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

The climb takes 8- 10 minutes and is moderately steep. Low to moderate extent of tiredness. The top of the hill is visible after 7 minutes.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The hilltop feels isolated and is very vast. The rows of rocks leading up to the top feel almost like a dromos, and guide one's steps up the slopes, in a controlled way. The dating of the rows is uncertain however, so I will limit my observations to tentative hypotheses.

Soundscape: the sounds of the springs (now destroyed by extensive quarrying), the breeze resounding through the bronze objects appended or attached to trees and perishable structures.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Great overall visibility, 180° as the modern hilltop consists of a middle bump surrounded by lower clearings and hollows.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Intervisible with Monte Altare and Presette- Prà della Stalla. Visibility of Monte Altare is, and would have been in the Iron Age, total, with no obstacles, as confirmed by GIS viewsheds.

INTERPRETATION

A prominent place devoted to agricultural cults and (possibly) the worship of the peak itself. There is the issue of water sources (springs) at Col Castelir: these would have been disturbed by the intensive quarrying carried out in time.

Presence of caves in situ, caves with water infiltrations creating limestone deposits.

The condition of water sources and caves today is unknown, as well as the full extent of damage done by quarrying.

Issue to explore: the significance of caves (related to cult??)

Presette- Prà della Stalla fieldwork form (37)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

13/05/04. 11am. Rainy and overcast.

SITE NAME

Presette (37)

LOCATION

A field within the Comune di Orsago/ locality Prà della Stalla (TV)

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

Flat fields near the spring line. Open ploughed fields. No evidence of any structural remains.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

Neither prominent nor secluded.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends in with the flat scenery.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

5 km ca. S-SE of Col Castelir

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

Unknown

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

Unknown

SEASONALITY FACTOR

Negligible

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Not applicable

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The location feels open, exposed and has a good view over Col Castelir.

Soundscape: too far from Col Castelir to hear sounds coming from there. Everyday sounds of grazing animals and people's voices.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Good visibility of Col Castelir and its quarry to the NW

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Intervisible with Col Castelir.

INTERPRETATION

A minor votive deposit. The field where Villa di Villa/Castelir type laminae were found during field walking (field 1) is 300m from field 2, where a Kraftig Profilierte fibula (La Tène 3 = 2nd century BC) was uncovered among other pre-Roman and Roman ornaments.

The absence of any "crenellated" or "peak" laminae among the 8 decorated and plain laminae found in Presette (37), all of the same type of Villa di Villa, may signify that there was no local height that could be replicated in the laminae.

The agricultural or fertility aspects of the cult at Villa di Villa/ Castelir were adopted or exported to this minor locale, but not the peak worship because irrelevant.

Bocca Lorenza fieldwork form (34)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

22/06/06, 4:17pm. Hot and sunny.

SITE NAME

Cave Bocca Lorenza (34)

LOCATION

South side of Monte Summano, North of Santorso village (province of Vicenza), in the middle of the Val Grande.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

The mouth of the cave. See picture. Hooks for ropes. Gigantic, fantastically-shaped rocks in the atrium.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

Secluded, set apart from the path along the Val Grande.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends into the rocky hill side.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

Unknown.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

The Iron Age settlement nuclei of Santorso were less than 1 km away.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

Unknown

SEASONALITY FACTOR

It would have been used year round as it provided shelter from elements and relief from the summer heat

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Tiredness: from Santorso it's a rather steep uphill hike. 6 out of 10.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In itself it is a rather shallow cave (36 m deep) but deeply picturesque. The sensation of cold (10 C) and the dripping sound of stillicide water from the karst infiltrations and the torrent in the depths of the cave impress the visitor.

The echoes and deep tunnels, rather steeply descending into the heart of the cave would have been perceived as magical, special, and secret. See Whitehouse's "A Tale of Two caves".

Awe-inspiring isolation and peaceful environment. One can only hear the birds and insects buzzing, no signs of modern activity.

The gloomy interior is damp and cold, a striking contrast with the stuffy and hot summer afternoon.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Very limited visibility because cave is engorged in an indentation of the rocky hill and sheltered from the other sides, and by rock formations in front and surrounding the entrance.

Woods all around the hill.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Not intervisible with Santorso. Sheltered.

INTERPRETATION

A long-term, multiple use ritual and habitation site, significant for a number of factors : its nature, its liminal positioning, the rock formations, the underground water, the echoes : a special place strategically distanced for transhumance.

Lagole fieldwork form (45)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

23/12/04. 3:10pm- 4:45pm. Cold but clear and sunny.

SITE NAME

Lagole di Calalzo (45)

LOCATION

Behind the Calalzo railway and on the SW shore of the Lago di Centro Cadore.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

The excavation area and the likely spot of the Venetic shrine were quite far from the present 'site' with the Laghetto and the springs. It lay underneath a stretch of the modern road down from Calalzo town centre and in the location currently occupied by *undergrowth*. Refer to maps for precise location.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

It was a secluded woodland location

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blended in with the surrounding woodland

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

Unknown

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

Nearest Mel.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

Mel again.

SEASONALITY FACTOR

It would have been snowbound and the water would have frozen in winter, creating a magic, surreal atmosphere.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Not applicable.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ice on the creeks surface is evocative and suggests a magical quality of water, which would have normally been perceived as running and fluid.

The likely location of the rites would have been surrounded by woodland, suggesting a somewhat hidden element of the cult, perhaps tied to the libation and ritual bathing rather than the more public and "official" offering of armed bronzetti.

Soundscape: the sounds carried by the crisp mountain air and the sweet, more subtle trickle of the springs.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Not very prominent or visible from surrounding topography.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Not applicable.

INTERPRETATION

Boundary, liminal location with sacred springs, a magic lake and mythical beings in charge of healing and possibly fertility and safety of travellers.

Monte Nenz fieldwork form (46)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

30/08/05. 12pm. Warm, sunny day.

SITE NAME

Monte Nenz, Trichiana (46)

LOCATION

A hillock (ca. 580 m a.s.l.) in the outskirts of a town in the province of Belluno, Trichiana.

Pit with Iron Age pottery and the Trichiana key excavated on the top.
BA pottery recovered from the foot of the hill (Padovan pers.comm.).

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

Hillock was recently reforested (60 years ago). Vegetation was minimal in antiquity. The shape of the hillock is that of a stand-alone round dome.

The top and sides of the hill are punctuated with rows of dry rubble that remind me of Col Castelir, however these rocks are thought to be a modern field boundary or used for livestock containment.

The top of the hillock is flat and spacious; it would have been suitable for use by many persons at once or even for habitation.

On the SE slope, just off the top, megalithic formations seem to form a sort of terracing, or "steps", at an elevation of ca. 574 m. See photos and GPS point 3.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

It looks and feels rather secluded on the hilltop, but that is a consequence of thick vegetation cover. It could have been otherwise in the Iron Age.

Not a strikingly prominent hill however, considering that the local skyline is dominated by the harsh peaks of the Dolomiti to the N-NW.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends in with surrounding landscape, but is one a few hillocks at the edge f the woods proper.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

Unknown.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

Unknown.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

Unknown.

SEASONALITY FACTOR

Negligible. It would have been accessible in all seasons.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Top is reached in 5 minutes, steepness of climb is moderate. There is no path uphill. Extent of tiredness low to moderate.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The locale feels isolated, peaceful and relaxing. No sound apart from that of birds and our voices.

The hilltop looks and feels spacious and easy to navigate. It is so wide that one side is hidden from view of one stands at the opposite edge of the top. The middle is punctuated by the rubble wall and fallen trees that offer impromptu seats.

The spot where the pit was dug is near the middle.

Experience of place is pleasant.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Visibility would have been enhanced in antiquity before the hilltop and sides were thickly forested with evergreens. There is a good visibility of the Dolomiti at the foot of the hill, looking north.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Not applicable.

INTERPRETATION

Local, small-scale special site. Bronze Age pottery indicates earlier use than previously thought.

Deposition of special objects, perhaps as a one-off act of worship.

The Hallstatt type key could have been of local production imitating the style of objects coming from beyond the Alps.

Monte Calvario fieldwork form (47)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

07/03/05. 11am. Cold but sunny.

SITE NAME

Monte Calvario (47)

LOCATION

Auronzo di Cadore (Belluno), in the Dolomiti Alps. It is today located halfway between iron rich springs [acque ferruginose] and a sulphurous spring.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

On a hill spur in the Dolomiti Alps, mountainous context. The valley where it lies is visually dominated by the rugged Mt Tudaio to the East [imposing lamina shape]

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

Prominent when viewed from the meadow below [if so in IA], not a prominent location in relation to neighbouring mountains and hills

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It would have stood out from the hillside but not among other hills.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

Not applicable

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

Unknown. Theory of settlement on the Lake of Central Cadore, disputed

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

Unknown

SEASONALITY FACTOR

Snowbound in winter and difficult to climb its slippery slope, but very easy to navigate in summer/spring/autumn.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Timing of climb is 5 minutes circa, low to moderate extent of tiredness when snowbound.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The location of the shrine is not strategically located as to be on the highest point of the mountain. Rather, it is on a natural ledge, enhancing recognition from a close range as opposed to visibility from afar that would have been possible if it'd be located on the top. Visibility is only possible on one side on the mountain, and intervisibility with Mt Tudaio is hidden if one goes around the other side of the Calvario.

Soundscape: sounds from the valley. Sounds of the libation rites. Drinking rituals.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

The stipe was not located on the hill top or in a position dominating the valley. Why was it here?

Visibility from: not an essential factor for picking the location. Not really impressive, but good visibility over the valley below

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Not applicable.

INTERPRETATION

Monte Tudaio dominates the skyline of Lagole, the Cadore and Auronzo. Its rugged shape reminds me of the "crenellated" laminae from Mt Altare and Villa di Villa- Castelir.

The Mt Calvario itself is a hillock of rounded shape. The archaeological area lies at the foot of the hill itself on the SE slope and consists of a semidetached promontory- ridge partly covered by trees. The scenery is dominated by the rugged heights of the Mt Tudaio to the East.

Monte Piai fieldwork form (41)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

9/11/05. 12pm. Clear, moderately cool day.

SITE NAME

Monte Piai (41)

LOCATION

Monte Piai, circa 560 metres a.s.l. The tallest hill in the surrounding landscape

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

The top has trees and rocks, in situ. Some may be standing stones that toppled over.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

It is a very prominent location.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It stands out as the tallest hill in the surrounding landscape, and also thanks to its pointed peak.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)**DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES**

600 to 700 metres from the settlement of Ceneda to the N-NE.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

Less than 1 km from the Frati necropoli, possibly burials on San Paolo (500 m)

SEASONALITY FACTOR

More difficult to negotiate its steep, near vertical slopes in autumn and winter due to slippery leaves or snow and mud soil cover.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Steep climb from the East slope: it takes about 40 minutes. The modern path is very slight and not very visible at times, it seems to end mid slope in the East sector: after this point one must climb by clutching rocks and tree branches. Slippery in autumn. High extent of tiredness. Hilltop is visible after 25-30 minutes.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Beautiful and secluded. The trees convey a sense of "closeness" and "intimacy" all around. Enclosedness of the hilltop, especially in the central sectors, where the dips and hollows are. One would have encountered a barrier of standing stones if approaching the top from the South side.

Soundscape: elevation cuts out most sounds from the hillfoot.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Good overall. "Visibility of" more marked thanks to the hill's peculiarly pointed shape.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Despite tree cover the surrounding hills are visible : Monte Altare, S. Rocco, Col cavalier, Col del Notol and Col di Stella (a part of Mt Piai according to Tomasi). Intervisibile with Monte Altare.

INTERPRETATION

The hilltop is too narrow for a settlement.

Montebelluna Via Cima Mandria fieldwork form (29)**DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS**

15/06/05. 2pm. Sunny.

SITE NAME

Posmon, Via Cima Mandria (29)

LOCATION

In the NW quarters of modern town of Montebelluna (TV). In the piedmont.
Iron Age and Roman burial place, with graves dating from the 8th century BC to the 1st AD.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

Moderately steep hill with modern constructions. There are houses on either side of the excavations area.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

It would have been rather prominent. Coming from downhill the location would have seemed rather high up, sloping gently.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It blends in with local moderately hilly landscape.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

Unknown.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

Unknown.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

Some 500m west of the clusters at Santa Maria in Colle and 1km south of the Scalette/Rampa Frà Anselmino groups.

SEASONALITY FACTOR

Negligible.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Not applicable. Hill is mildly steep.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is a pleasant, rather scenic location surrounded by hilly meadows on an isolated and quiet residential street. The road leads uphill to a private residence.

It feels elevated and exposed even if it is downhill from the locales of Scalette and Rampa Frà Anselmino further up.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Its positioning midslope would have afforded the location a relatively good visibility over the underlying terrain. Unfortunately, the undetected settlement nucleus (i) of Iron Age Montebelluna does not allow me to make inferences as to the location of cemeteries in relation to habitation space.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Not applicable.

INTERPRETATION

High rank, long-term burial spot in a prominent location compared to other clusters of graves of the same period, despite its relatively low-lying positioning.

Este Benvenuti fieldwork form (8)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

29/07/05. 11:30am. Clear, sunny day, moderately hot.

SITE NAME

Este Benvenuti (8)

LOCATION

The site is known as the Necropoli Benvenuti, located under Villa Cornaro Benvenuti, a ruined 18th century Villa Veneta.

On a hill slope, north of main settlement areas. N-NW of Iron Age settlement nuclei. It is part of a cluster of cemeteries in the NW sector of Este: Ricovero, Alfonsi, and Muletti.

Part of an extensive necropolis area, not free-standing.

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

A hill slope of moderate height. It is an invisible site as no traces of excavations and burials survive.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

It feels prominent compared to the underlying settlement/ city of Este. However modern vegetation cover hides it from visibility from below.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

It rather stands out.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

Less than 1km from Colle del Principe- Caldevigo, to the NW.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

There was a Bronze Age settlement (9th BC) in the Via Dietro Duomo.

1 km from Iron Age habitation nuclei.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

750 m East of Casa di Ricovero.

SEASONALITY FACTOR

Negligible

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

Ascent is not at all difficult. The ascent takes 3 to 5 minutes along a *modern* path that is quite steep at times.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is an elevated burial spot, and part of a series of funerary spots North of Este.

The locale feels secluded owing to the thick vegetation cover, and its elevated positioning in relation to underlying Este.

Soundscape: not easy to reconstruct. Periodical funerary processions up the hill.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Impeded by modern vegetation. Taking into account tree cover, the spot would have dominated a view over the W sector of Iron Age Este.

INTERVISIBILITY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Not applicable.

INTERPRETATION

There was a belt of Northern cemeteries - in relation to main settlement nuclei in Iron Age - going from the Casa di Ricovero- Via Santo Stefano to Via Meggiaro.

Monte Dolada fieldwork form (43)

DATE AND TIME, WEATHER CONDITIONS

22/06/06- 12:40pm. Hot and sunny day.

SITE NAME

Pian de la Gnella (dell'Agnella) cemetery, Mt Dolada (43)

LOCATION

Pian de la Gnella, Staol, on the slope of Mt Dolada in the Comune of Pieve d'Alpago

MODERN VISIBLE FEATURES

927 metres a.s.l. a woodland clearing to the Northwest (to the right of) the footpath bordering Pian dell'Agnella. Largely unaltered woodland locale.

Clearing on top of a ridge overlooking a slightly sloping dip some 30-40 metres down.

EXTENT OF PROMINENCE / SECLUSION

Secluded and surrounded by conifers and beech.

Isolated. One can barely hear any sounds at all from here.

Easy to reach via the footpath. Not sure how old the footpath is though.

RELATIONSHIP TO SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE (i.e. blends in, contrasts)

Blends in. The positioning just on the edge of the dip makes it feel prominent though, "elevated" in relation to the surrounding woodland topography. Almost on a ledge.

DISTANCE FROM OTHER CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER VOTIVE DEPOSITS (IF APPLICABLE)

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS OR EARLIER SETTLEMENT SITES

Unknown. V likely contemporary shepherds settlements along the alpeggio route.

DISTANCE FROM KNOWN CONTEMPORANEOUS CEMETERIES

Not applicable. However, it is located 700 m from Roman burial place of Staol, at the same altitude but further South below Pian dell'Agnella.

SEASONALITY FACTOR

Snowbound in winter? Likely at this elevation (Over 900 metres).

In summer it would have been easily visited during the transhumance cycle.

TIMING OF CLIMB/ EXTENT OF TIREDNESS/ TIMING OF VISUALISATION OF THE PEAK (if applicable):

It cannot be reached on foot from the mountain foot due to thick wood cover.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is very peaceful and faraway from things.

The positioning on the edge of the dip makes it feel raised, exposed but in a positive sense, almost on display.

The location is shrouded in silence, apart from the usual woodland sounds.

VISIBILITY OF/ FROM SITE

Not visible from the neighbouring slopes/clearings. Not intervisible with Roman burial spot.

Visibility impeded/hindered by tree cover all round (sicne when ?) and a summer heat-haze coverign the summits of nearby mountains, even the very top of the Dolada and the Teverone to the North.

INTERVISIBILTY WITH NEARBY STIPI (if applicable)

Not applicable.

INTERPRETATION

High elevation burial place of important individuals (6th- 5th centuries BC).

GPS-recorded coordinates of locations mentioned in the thesis

Este Morluno (2)

GPS Point 1 (main)= Palazzina Morluno:

N45.13.223

E011.38.854

Elevation 34m

GPS Pt 2 = Via Paleoveneti- Capodaglio:

N45.13.391

E011.38.657

Elevation 6m

Este Megliaro (6)

GPS Pt. 1 = by the Swimming Pool

N45.13.681

E011.40.228

Elevation 9m

Colle del Principe-Este Caldevigo (7)

GPS Pt.1 = outside the gate of Palazzo del Principe

N45. 14. 155

E011.39. 371

Elevation m 103

Montegrotto Terme (10)

GPS Point 1= Roman Baths on Via Scavi

N45.19.732

E011.47.579

Elevation 7m

Point 2= Colle Berta/ Cemetery

N 45°19.699

E 011°46.846

Elevation 15m

Lova (1)

GPS Point 1= taken from the field where they found the temple

N 45.20.424

E 12.07.895

Elevation -1m

Altichiero (20)

Pt. 1 = this point is the closest to the likely location of the Iron Age river deposit of Altichiero. Taken opposite the start of a modern massicciata on the opposite river bank, from the river bend.

N45°27.169

E011°51.827

Elevation 19 m

Altino La Fornace (26)

Pt. 1 =taken at the excavation area

N 45 32 481

E012°23'876

Elevation 6m

Monte Altare (40)

GPS Point 1= on hill top

N45.33.057

E012.26.904

Elevation 433m

GPS Point 2= spring on Pra Liss

N

E

Elevation

Col Castelar (42)

GPS Point 1= base camp by roadside

N45.58.543

E012.25.230

Elevation 315m

Pt.2 = clearing on the top. Tree in the middle of clearing

N45.58.498

E012.25.412

Elevation 351m

Castello Roganzuolo (36)

Presette (37)

GPS Point 1= field 1

N45.54.471

E012.27.334
Elevation 30m

GPS Point 2= field 2- surface scatter
N45.54.464
E012.27.460
Elevation 25m

Cave of Bocca Lorenza (34)

GPS Pt 1= cave mouth
N45.44.686
E011.24.113
Elevation 372m

Lagole (45)

GPS Pt 1= Laghetto delle Tose
N 46.26.228
E012.23.179
Elevation 715m

Monte Nenz, Trichiana (46)

Hill top
N46.04.044
E012.09.767
Elevation 557m

Monte Calvario, Auronzo (47)

GPS pt. 1 = hill top (structural remains and last Via Crucis cross)
Hill top (structural remains)
N45.33.057
E012.26.904
Elevation m930

Monte Piail (41)

Pt 1= top
N
E
Elevation

Montebelluna (29)

Pt1 = Via Cima Mandria
N45.46.812
E012.01.794
Elevation 114m

Pt 2= Via Scalette
N45.46.921
E012.02.437
Elevation 136m

Este Benvenuti (8)

Pt 1= Villa Cornaro Benvenuti

N45.13.911
E011.39.334
Elevation 27m

Padua

Pt 1= Ex-Pilsen, Piazza Insurrezione
N45.24.555
E011.52.481
Elevation -24m

Pt 2= Santa Lucia, Piazza Garibaldi (middle of the square)
N45.24.561
E011.52.674
Elevation -24m

Pt 3= San Daniele, church of San Daniele, Via Umberto I
N45.24.067
E011.52.593
Elevation -10m

Pt 4= Via del Pozzo Dipinto (shop corner)
N45.24.336
E011.52.593
Elevation -8m

Monte Dolada

Pt 1= Pian dell'Agnella cemetery area
N46.11.482
E012.22.433
Elevation 901m

Appendix 3. Alternative landscape archaeologies. Aspects of folklore, local history, hidden sites and past and present perceptions

a) Place names in proto-historic landscape archaeology

Place names are helpful aids and pointers in historic landscape archaeology and particularly useful in the study of territories and places when they can support and corroborate, or even shed new light on documentary evidence pertaining to that particular area. What I am dealing with however is the later prehistoric period in the Veneto, and the assessment of the importance of topography and landscape settings, the extent of their perception by people inhabiting them and the influence on the establishment of sacred places.

I came across toponomastic studies on the area I am studying and where I am conducting a significant part of my fieldwork. Besides studying and using modern maps, I also looked at historic maps to get a feel of how the scenery and landforms have changed, i.e. whether rivers and creeks have diverted their course, whether land has been reclaimed and so on. In the process of assessing the state of the territory in pre-modern times I have come across some very interesting place names and started wondering if they could contribute to an enhanced understanding of the territory for a period for which documentary evidence does not exist: the Iron Age. For instance, the locale of Villa di Villa/Col Castelir (42) yielded a great quantity of votive objects pertaining to the local Venetic material culture and a few dozens objects pertaining to the La Tène cultural milieu such as fibulae, torques and transalpine (Noric) coinage dating to the 3rd BC circa.

In the modern landscape there is a torrent called "Insuga", although on late 18th century maps the torrent is spelt "Ansuga". Philologist and place name scholar Bassett-Trumper has proposed an interpretation of the name as the Celtic root "ans-", indicating the processional way of the god Belenus, the "pan-Celtic" Apollo as it were (Bassett-Trumper and Tomasi 2004). Bassett also proposes an interesting parallel with the British "Camulodunum" as "the stronghold of Belenus" and the nearby locality "Ad Ansam" as "the processional way of the god". Given the presence of a discrete number of artefacts belonging to the "Celtic" rather than Italic material culture in Villa di Villa, and their likely sacred character as votive offerings to an unnamed local male deity, and the torrent Ansuga that flowed and still flows at the foot of the hill where the sanctuary was located, the scholar proposes a reading of the watercourse as a ritual component of the cult, the symbolic access way to the shrine dedicated to an ambiguous deity of many attributes, among which the representation of a warrior class and the protection of herds. A local legend dating to the 6th century AD seems to play a role in this admittedly colourful but interesting interpretation of

the local toponym: the corpse of the patron saint of the nearby town of Ceneda (Vittorio Veneto), the legendary San Tiziano, is said to have flowed against the current in the Ansuga on its way to its rightful place of rest, the cathedral of its native town. Bassett-Trumper says that the legend involving the "magic" and supernatural passage of the saint on the water could be reminiscent of much earlier rituals taking place on the Ansuga/Insuga and involving a processional water pilgrimage leading to the worship place of a local "Belenus" by the "Celtic" inhabitants of the area, who are thought to have been a minority (Bassett-Trumper and Tomasi 2004: 14-18).

More likely, the local inhabitants might have been aware of this exotic type of ritual procession and incorporated it into their own practices.

What makes me think, and not altogether reject this theory of sacred water courses and processional ways, aside from the actual presence of La Tène objects at this site bearing witness, if nothing else, to visits to the shrine by people from Northern regions, is the presence of similarly named water courses in two other places where shrines existed in the Venetic Iron Age and Romanisation periods, when lively contacts and exchange with La Tène peoples are amply documented by material culture. One, the Ansiei creek, is located some 50 metres from the sanctuary of Monte Calvario (47), in the upper Cadore area, almost at the boundary with Austria and located on the route leading from Italy to Austria through the Alpine Comelico pass. The sanctuary yielded 30 coins belonging to the La Tène culture across the Alps (Zandegiacomo 2005, pers.comm.) The Asiola place name, deriving from the root "as-" meaning spring, is nowadays lost but existed as late as the 8th century AD in Aquileia, a place that yielded the remains of a Republican sanctuary with inscriptions to the god "Belinos" and documented in 6th century AD writings as the shrine of Behel (Tomasi pers. comm., Bassett-Trumper and Tomasi 2004).

The Monte Altare case study

Monte Altare (40) is situated just under 10 km from Villa di Villa and the torrent named Insuga/Ansuga. According to philologists, the name Alt- has Northern roots and indicates a "height rising above or over water", referring to the presence of a dozen springs scattered along the hill sides and known since antiquity for their salubrious mineral content (Tomasi 2006 Pers. Comm.).

Monte Altare, a cult place between the 6th century BC and the 4th century AD, yielded a great quantity of "Noric" coinage and a few fragments of La Tène type fibulae. The root of the name of the hill where the sanctuary was located, and which was intervisible with and along the same transhumance route as Villa di Villa (42) could corroborate its sacred

significance as a high place (as suggested by myself to interpret the numerous bronze sheet artefacts seemingly depicting a peak as the core of the cult, see chapters 5 and 6) and could reinstate the role of the sacred place for local communities and travellers or pilgrims from far afield, if not transhumant groups paying their respects to the god or gods inhabiting the upper slopes of the hill. In addition to that, the cemetery of I Frati (see C1) yielded a number of torques that seem to bear witness to a transalpine influence on the local material culture (Arnosti 1996, 66).

Lastly, the place-name "Salsa" (mineral/salty [water]) corresponds to a locality at the foot of Monte Altare: the term could indicate sacred or special locations tied to water in a subnormal form (gassy and mineral): a location that saw the establishment of thermal baths in antiquity (?), a Longobard burial place, one 11th century chapel now converted into a private residence and a later church of San Michele (Tomasi 2006 Pers. Comm., Arnosti 1996a).

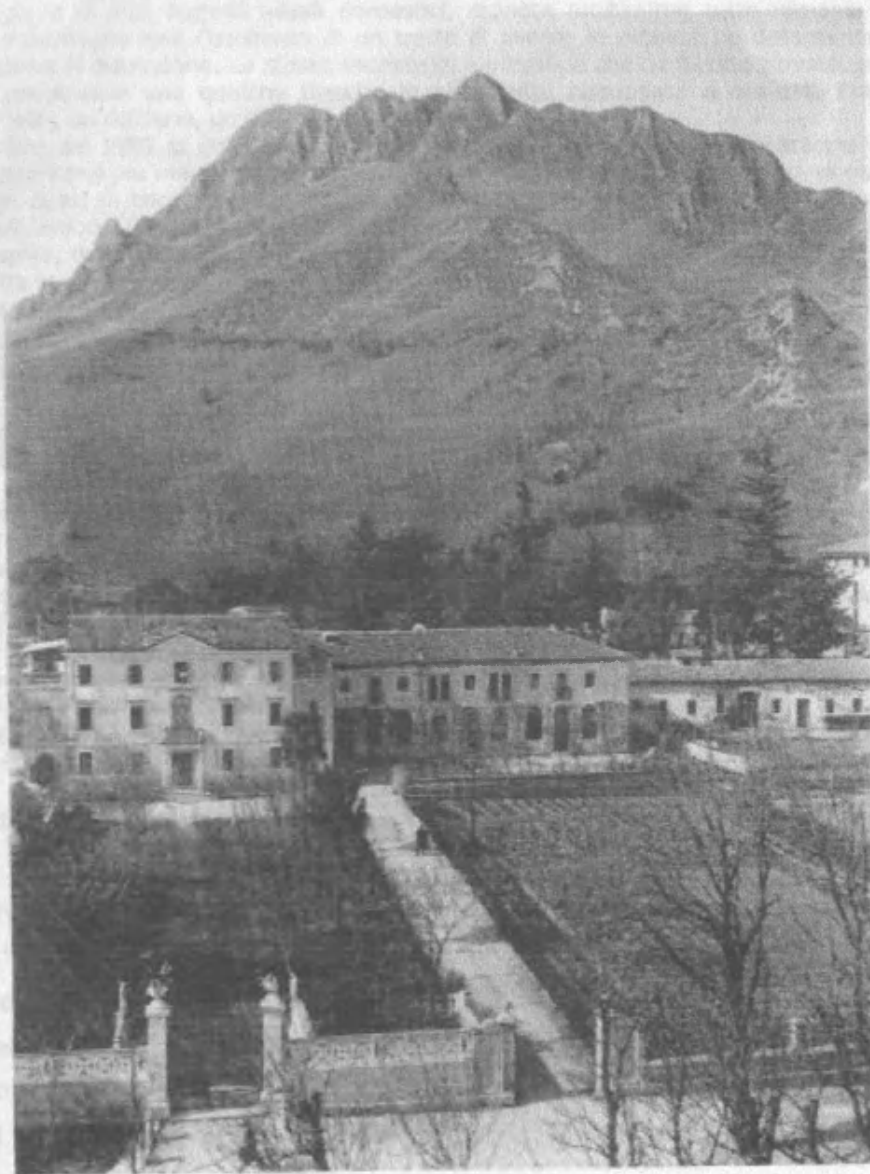
Monte Altare was a significant location through the centuries.

The two early medieval Oratori of San Giovanni and Santa Elisabetta (now disappeared) in the post-castrum, not associated to any settlement nucleus or farmstead and seemingly isolated, may have been built by the people who found shelter on the post castrum in times of turmoil in the middle ages. Or, more likely, they could have been built to exorcise the *Collo Maledicto (Cursed Hill)*, where in late antiquity and during the Middle Ages local peasants came across pagan idols (cf. Altenberg 2003:109 and Morris 1989: 50 ff.).

In a 1690 map there is a vista of the hill slopes of Monte Altare called "pascoli crodosi de Nantare", rocky pastureland of Nantare.

Contrary to common belief, the nomenclature Monte ALTARE dates to the 18th century and not to the World War 1 when the cross was located on the top of the hill to commemorate the loss of lives in the war.

The Brazzoduro Affair



VILLA BERTORELLI, GIÀ BRAZZODURO, E IL MONTE ALTARE 1925-40

By researching historic documents I discovered a 'forgotten' archaeological site, originally identified two centuries ago by a local antiquarian, Francesco Trojer. In his own words,

Nel dicembre del 1881 la famiglia Braccioduro fece vangare, propriamente quello che qui si dice rifondare, un suo tenere, posto lungo la via Concordia, dalla parte della pianura, poco al di sotto del

nuovo palazzo municipale. Alla profondità di un metro un metro e mezzo circa, si trovarono dovunque muri di fondamenta di case e tratti di pavimenti; strati di cenere, di carboni e di una materia formata da metalli diversi fusi assieme; ossa umane e di cavalli; cocci, rottami, pietre cotte e abbruciate, avanzi di fibule e di altri oggetti usuali domestici, monete moltissime tutte romane. Le diramate fondamenta mostravano colà l'esistenza di un tratto di paese; le monete ne determinavano l'epoca; ogni cosa chiariva la distruzione. Le stesse monete di moltissime che ne furono trovate, solo sette, che io possedè, conservano una qualche traccia, le altre tutte abbruciate e disfatte. Fra quelle: due Augusti, un Probo, un Gallieno, un Costantino, due incerti.

Ma nel dicembre del 1882 si ripigliarono i lavori, io raddoppiai la vigilanza. Le tracce di paese e di distruzione apparirono più manifeste; di nuovo le fondamenta diramate da per tutto, di nuovo i tratti di pavimento, gli strati di cenere, di carboni, di ossa, di materie metalliche; abbondantissime le terre cotte, cioè vasi, anfore, urne, ecc. che erano già rotte o l'andavano al momento; potei raccogliere delle fibule, delle spille, delle chiavi, un piccolo torso in bronzo ed altri simili oggetti, nonché quaranta tre monete sole fra le innumerevoli ritenute, abbastanza conservate. (...)

Vittorio, 4 Agosto 1886

Di V.S.III.ma obbligatissimo

Francesco Troyer

[In December 1881 the Braccioduro family excavated one of their lands located on Via Concordia, on the side of the plain, just below the new Town Hall. At the approximate depth of 1-1.5 m they unearthed a vast expanse of foundation walls, and parts of floors; also ashy layers, charcoal, and a mass of different metals, all melted together, human bones and *horse bones*, pottery, burnt stones, fragments of fibulae and 'domestic' objects, and various coins, all Roman in date. The extensive foundations showed the existence of a part of the town, while the coins dated it, and everything bore witness of destruction. Of the many coins found only seven are recognisable: two Augustus, one Probus, one Gallienus, one Constantine and two uncertain denominations.

In December 1882 the works resumed and my surveillance intensified. Traces of a settlement and of destruction became more evident: yet more extensive foundations, the stretches of floor, the layers of ash, charcoal, bones, metals, an abundance of terracottas such as amphorae, urns, already broken or broken during the excavations. I collected fibulae, pins, keys, a small bronze torso and other similar objects, and 43 recognisable coins among the very many that were burnt beyond recognition.]

(Source: 'Lettere erudite a Jacopo Bernardi'- manuscript. My translation and emphasis)

The finds from Braccioduro/Brazzoduro (Trojer 1881-82) seem to indicate a lost [Roman] cemetery]: this locale, at the foot of Monte Altare, was interpreted by the antiquarian as a settlement due to the extensive floor surface, but could in fact have been a ritual rather than 'secular' building, a ritual centre that lasted centuries: the Braccioduro villa is a mere 30 metres from the 11th century church of Salsa, and can therefore be connected with the Salsa burial site, near the find spot of the Longobard cross (1842) and at the same depth (ca. 1.5 m).

The significant element consists of the find of horse and human remains in close association, indicating a funerary or ritual context, a one-off in this part of the Veneto. A few metres north of this 'ritual' area we find the hot spring area (Terme)¹¹.

¹¹ NB The nearby toponym Termen indicates the boundary between Ceneda and Serravalle corresponding to the line coming down from the crest of Monte Altare and passing in front of La Rocchetta (San Gottardo).

METHODOLOGY- aspects of the Monte Altare (40) pilot study

Place perception and interpretation

Interpretation in the field

Lines of sight (Linee visive direttrici)

Fieldwork paths and approaches

By car

On foot

Shapes and appearance of the hill –

From the north: *wooded and hilly*

From the east: *pyramidal,*

From the south: *rocky, imposing vertical elements, like a temple in nature*

Perspectives

Panoramic view

South

North

East

West

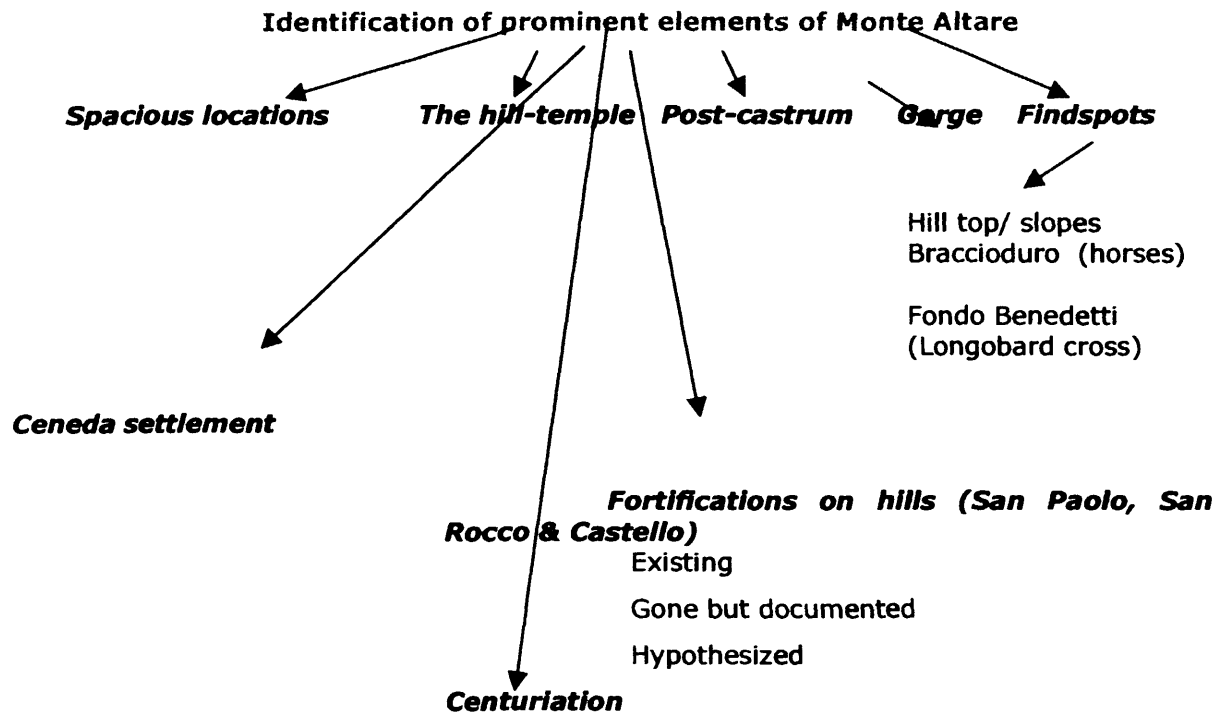
Close-up view

From south

From north

From east

From west



Topographic elements of the hill environs

Linear Elements

Roads / paths

Historic up to 1813 (Napoleonic catasto)

Single locations

Existing

That can be reached

Spring of Acqua Salsa

11th century church of Salsa

San Gottardo (la Rocchetta)

Invisible (e.g. indicated by find spots
and/or on historic maps)

Oratorio S.ta Elisabetta

Oratorio of San Giovanni

Cannot be reached

*Buss dela vecia (the old
hag's nook) (after Arnosti 1993)*

Artefacts to take into account

Peak laminae – do they reflect or mimic the shape of the hill?

Finds Trojer-Braccioduro 1882 (*Moret*).

A D.O.M. Roman sepulchre lid= Trace of an earlier cemetery among the oratori rubble in
the post castrum?

- did they come from the Brazzoduro area?

AL FEC(IT) stone- from the context of the ancient Salsa church (*TIRAC Moret 1983*)

b) The Anguane. Ethnography and legend in Lagole di Cadore

During my research and fieldwork at Lagole I found came across the local lore concerning the aquatic nymphs Anguane. They have many names, among which Lònghe Lòngagne (Cherubin 2002), Acquane, Guane, Longane, Ongane, Agane (Scarpa 2003, 11).

According to Francesca Scarpa's research, "le Anguane sono divinità dimoranti nell'acqua, in stagni, laghi, fiumi, antri acquosi" (Scarpa 2003, 11), and their presence in the lore of the whole Cadore region is a constant feature. She attributes the cult of female deities to matriarchal group structure in the days before sedentary settlements and the spread of agricultural communities.

Rita Barnabò's research (Barnabò 2002) is also concerned with the possible origins of the myth of the Anguane, in this case pertaining to the specific locality of Lagole and Sabassa, the latter taking its name from the queen of the Anguane nymphs.

These are aquatic beings inhabiting watery places and submerged caves (there are a number of recorded underwater caves in the lakes around Lagole), with healing and magic powers, that can be used to do good or evil to people, crops and livestock depending on the circumstances of people's interaction with them. Their names occur in local toponyms, especially in Lagole with "Caverne delle Langanes" and "Sabasa" (Sabassa or Sabasa being the queen of the Anguane or Longane according to the legend).

In summary, it appears as if these beings incarnated, and still did until recently in a thoroughly Christianised area, the healing and beneficial qualities of spring water in the Cadore, especially in the Lagole area, and might echo aquatic divinities that go back a long time, long before Christianity and even the advent of Roman domination and religion.

A post-scriptum. Cross-regional observations

Interestingly, despite a similar surface expansion and archaeological interest in the last century, there seem to be many more sacred places in the Veneto than in the Marche - the traditionally Picene territory: is this a case of negative evidence due to the patchy nature of archaeology in the early days of Picene studies, or rather the scarce visibility of the terrain impeding or delaying discoveries by field walking and survey, and is this visibility ultimately tied to the very morphology of the Picene land, i.e. a mountainous and hilly region?

This uneven patterns of reconnaissance of archaeological traces in the two regions (the Veneto and the Marche) could have implications in the extremely patchy nature of what we know of, for instance, settlement patterns and cemeteries in the Veneto alone, hence the virtual silence from the north-east piedmont and the Alpine north in terms of settlement, site hierarchies, and local burial customs.

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Monte Altare



40 Monte Altare

- | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| | extent of hill or prominent place - as encountered and perceived | | water | | dry stone wall | | monumental rock formations (dynamic elements) |
| | height above sea level (asl) | | springs | | trees linked with locality | | plain / roomy / open places allowing long-term stays and rest |
| | contour lines: 10 metre interval | | boulders | | actual surviving fortifications | | hot spring |
| | main road | | ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIND AREAS | | lost fortifications | | disappeared churches |
| | secondary road | | site-specific building | | visualisations (visual directions of photographs) | | |
| | unmetalled road | | capitello | | | | |
| | actual path | | chapel / minor church | | | | |
| | unmarked path | | | | | | |